

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
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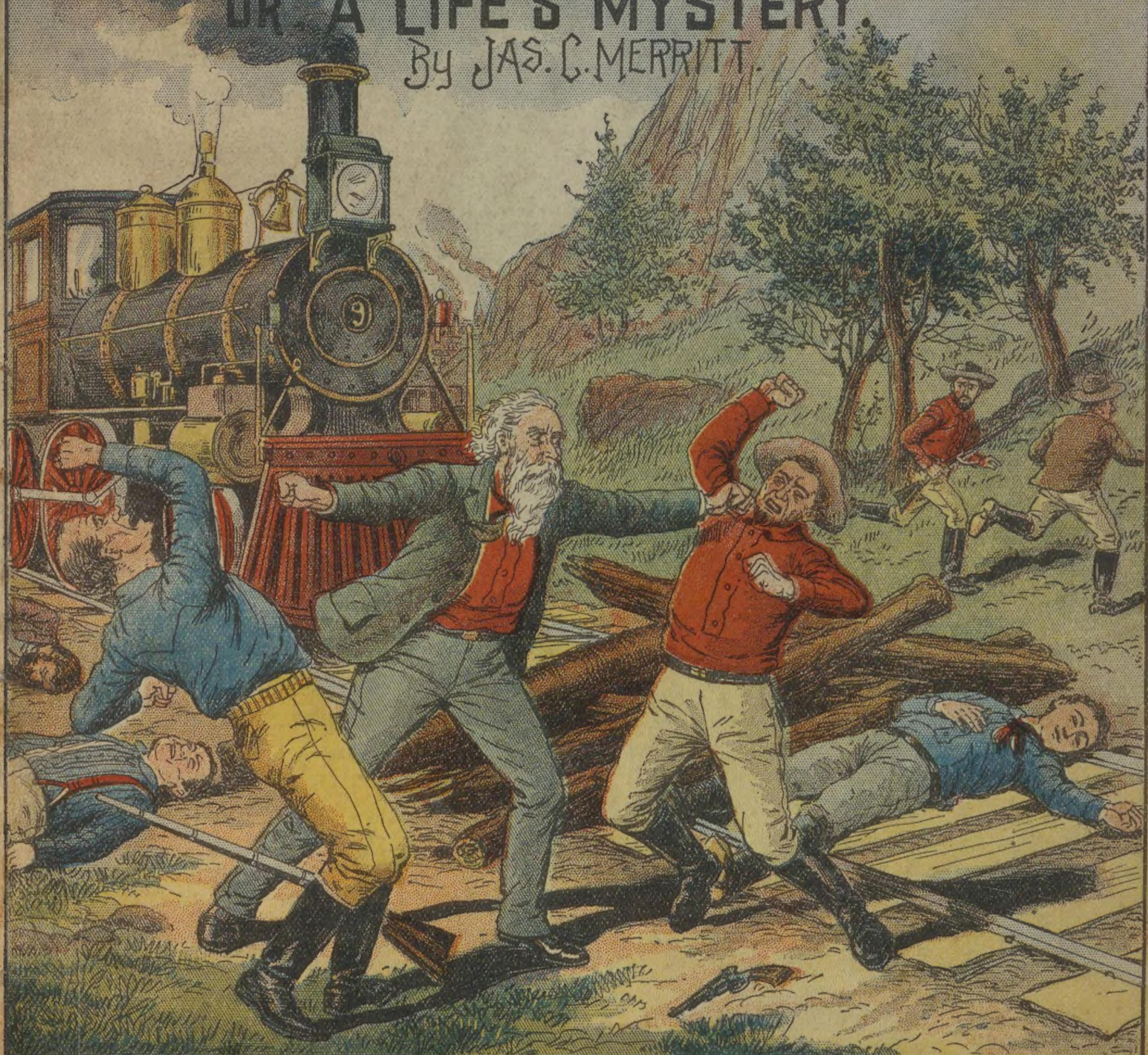
NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 4, 1903.

Price 5 Cents.

THE MANIAC ENGINEER;

OR A LIFE'S MYSTERY.

By JAS. C. MERRITT.



"Ah, who's going to run the engine now?" asked one of the men with a laugh. "I am!" shouted a voice, and a tall man with long, white hair and beard suddenly appeared in their midst.

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NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 4, 1903.

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The Maniac Engineer

OR,

A LIFE'S MYSTERY.

BY JAS. C. MERRITT.

CHAPTER I.

TWO MEN UPON AN ERRAND OF DEATH.

"Hey, Rod!"
"Well, Turk?"
"We must get to business."
"That we must."
"But I say, Rod?"
"Spit it out!"
"It must be done up in good style."
"You're right!"
"No bungling, Rod."
"Right you are, Turk! We don't want to have to do it over again."
"I guess not."
"And the money will be paid down handsome as soon as it is over."
"He's good pay, the boss is."
"I should say so."
"Why can't he hide the chap away. What's the good of blood, anyhow?"
"Thunder and guns, man, won't it be worse by and by if it ain't done up slick now?"
"How so?"
"Supposing the lad grows up?"
"Supposing he does?"
"Won't he be wanting to know everything, who he is and all that. He'll find out, of course, and then Tom Jewell will be in a pretty fix, won't he?"
"How will he?"
"The lady will know that he lied to her, and he will not get a cent. All her relatives will have it."
"Can't a man do what he likes with his own wife's money, I'd like to know?"
"Not in this case."
"Why so?"
"Because that infernal old father of hers—he was half chazy. I do believe—left it in that way."

"Her husband must be single. If he has had any youngsters by former marriages, neither he nor she get anything but the interest, and when she dies, the principal goes to her relatives."

"What about children of their own?"

"If it's a boy, he gets all when his parents die, they sharing the interest with him while they live; if a girl, she gets ten thousand, that's all."

"And Tom Jewell is bound to get the whole thing in spite of this boy by his first wife that he has stowed away out of sight."

"That's it, and that's why he wants him out of the way."

"Kill his own child?"

"Certainly; he has no love for the brat. It looks too much like the mother."

"She was a good woman?"

"Ay, none better, but Tom Jewell thought she had a fortune, and she hadn't a red. Her old father lost every cent in speculation."

"Maybe she got fooled, too."

"Thinking he might be rich?"

"That's it."

"No, she wasn't that sort; she married him for love."

"And this one, that he is married to now, and who presented him with a child, a year or more ago, she does not know of the first marriage?"

"No; and she isn't likely to. It was made in New York. The records are safe from the curious; the boy has never been seen by her—he is not known as his child."

"What's the use of blood, then, as I said before? Can't he keep the matter hushed up and go ahead all the same?"

"No, he is afraid of that and, besides, he hates the boy on account of his likeness to his mother."

"Well, I don't know as we care. Money is money, after all, and why shouldn't we earn it as somebody else?"

"That's the ticket. It's got to be done, and if we get too blame squeamish, he'll find some one that ain't and they'll get the money."

"That's it again, Turk, and we might better have it than some one who won't do the job up so neat."

"Right you are, Rod. I say, have you seen the Maniac lately?"

"Yes, he's on it again. He'll be crazy drunk before he knows it."

"He's a good engineer."

"Yes, when he don't make mistakes."

"A mistake on his part might help us now."

"What are you driving at?"

"He might be made to do this job, you know, lose his place, and then—"

"I understand. We'll get even with him. You hid the last bottle in his cab?"

"Yes."

"Not hidden so carefully but that he, with his thirst for liquor, could smell it out?"

"Trust me for that, Rod. I know how to manage a job of that sort. But I say, my boy, the night is coming on swiftly. We must make tracks."

"Ay, that we must, but let's finish the bottle."

"Here goes then. Hold your mug, so, that's all you'll get. The rest for me."

They were two precious villains, and, as we will have occasion to speak of them again, it may be well to describe them.

Rodney Jamison, called Rod for brevity, would be known as a villain at first sight, never looking a man square in the face, not even one of his associates in crime, and had beetling brows, shaded by a mass of tangled, greyish hair which hung over his forehead like turf on the edge of a cliff; coarse features, a flat nose, and a mouth tightly closed, the lips just disclosing the white teeth, which showed his animal nature at a glance.

His companion bore the not altogether euphonious name of Isaac Barak, but was universally known as the Turk, from his swarthy complexion and his habit of wearing a red handkerchief around his head under his rough, slouched hat, and from his inordinate use of the narcotic weed.

The two men, on leaving the house, struck off toward the hills, crossed them, descended on the other side, coming down just by the railroad track.

"What time have you, Rod?"

"Just 7:36, Turk."

"The Maniac's train will be due at this point in just twenty minutes."

"You're going to do it that way?"

"Certainly. We'll go up to the house where it is and take it away, and they won't care, anyhow. Tell me," he added suddenly, "what do you see down there by the side of the track?"

"A drunken man! Egad, it's lucky he didn't fall across the rails."

"We can use that drunken fellow, Rod."

"How so?"

"The child is stolen, see, then the man falls drunk alongside the track, while the child is on the track."

"Go on."

"Along comes the maniac's train. He is too drunk to more than run his engine, let alone keeping a lookout, the iron horse catches up the youngster, tosses it, mangled and dead, ahead of it, tramples the life out of it, and our drunken friend gets the credit, while we get the cash. I tell you, Rod, there's nothing like sobriety."

"Egad! you've got a head on, you Turk!"

"Hurry, man. Don't lag so looking at the drunkard. It's only Dan Browning, and he ain't likely to wake up till morning. Hurry, or we will be late."

A few minutes later what do we see?

The two villains just disappearing over the crest of the hill, the drunken man still lying insensible by the side of the

track, and upon the track between the rails—oh, horror! a tender infant fast asleep!

And at that moment the night express train, driven by the Maniac engineer, is approaching, its whistle of warning being heard not a mile away.

CHAPTER II.

SNATCHED FROM THE JAWS OF AN IRON HORSE.

Who was the Maniac engineer, and why was he thus called?

Was he, in fact a maniac—an insane person?

If so, why was he permitted to be at large?

Worse than that, why was he given the charge of hundreds of human lives that might be sacrificed by his slightest caprice?

Who could be so rash as to put an insane man in the position of an engineer, a place of utmost responsibility, and one which demanded the clearest head and strongest nerves?

A few words will explain the whole matter.

Frederick Boynton was, when in his normal condition, as a sane man, as good an engineer, and as careful and conscientious an employe as you could find.

He had acquired a fatal taste for strong drink, however, which he had unsuccessfully tried to overcome.

When under the influence of spirituous liquors, he became an entirely different being, his entire nature undergoing a change.

He was a madman, a maniac, a veritable demon, and his ravings at such times were most frightful to behold, and strong men shuddered as they heard his drunken yells.

He was absolutely uncontrollable when thus excited by drink, and no one could tell what mad freak he might commit.

The safety of passengers, the good name of the railroad, demanded that such a man should be removed, and after repeated warnings, he was discharged.

This seemed to arouse him to a sense of the reprovability of his conduct.

He gave up drinking and behaved himself so well that in a short time he was taken back and given steady work.

He was really the best engineer on the road and could run the night express safer and more rapidly than any one who tried it.

It was necessary to make connections with other roads running into Chicago and thence to the east, and if this could be done regularly, much business would accrue to the road.

Boynton knew this and was always careful to make good time in connecting, as well as to stop often enough along the road to get a sufficient number of passengers, being able by his superior skill, to get more speed out of his engine, stop oftener, and still make better time than any other engineer that had ever tried it.

He promised to attend to business, and he did so for a long time, keeping away from saloons and drinking places, seemingly conducting himself with the utmost propriety.

At last there began to be noticed a strangeness in his conduct, and people whispered that he had again taken to strong drink.

He really intended to give up drinking, and abandoned the practice of hiding liquor under his seat, but on many occasions he had found a bottle there and had drank it.

He seemed to feel that some one was trying to ruin him, and once he did muster strength to dash the bottle and its contents upon the track.

Whoever the secret enemy was, he seemed to be determined to succeed in his purpose, for the bottles continued to be

hidden away, and Boynton did not always have the moral courage to destroy them.

He did go so far as to change his locker, but even that was found out and, after awhile, no matter where he would stow away his traps, whether in the cab or in the baggage car, he would always find plenty of the vile stuff which threatened to cause his ultimate ruin, tucked away in his cupboards, nearly every time he went to them.

Little by little, he submitted to what seemed to be his uninvited fate, approaching by sure and steady steps once more to the verge of madness, his eyes being hollow; his laugh terrible to hear, and his fingers, moving nervously, as if the desire to strangle some one had taken possession of him.

He still continued to run the night express, and the station just ahead of where the villains had left the poor child and which was now rapidly nearing, was one at which the train did not stop.

Consequently, there would be no abatement of speed, and on and on came the iron monster, puffing, snorting and screaming.

A broad track of glowing light is thrown ahead of the engine, and the steel rails glitter in the rays like burnished gold.

The Maniac engineer is at his post, his hand on the lever, and his eye upon the dial, while not far away, right in the track of the monster, sleeps a pretty boy, unconscious of his danger.

The engineer stands firm at his post and every sense is on the alert, though his eyes, glancing out from underneath the glazed visor of his cap, have an insane look about them that one does not care to meet.

Now the glare of the headlight is thrown over the child, sleeping so peacefully there, while close at hand the wretched sot in his drunken sleep knows naught of his danger, nor of the horrible suspicion that will attach to him, after the frightful instrument of death has passed by.

But the Maniac engineer—will he see the child's peril?

Will those glittering eyes alight on that white object before him, and show him the imminent danger in which a human life may be placed.

Even if he does see, can he save the child?

Still he stands there, handling the monster with perfect ease, and controlling its every motion with a master hand.

Then suddenly, as he sounds the warning of his approach, he looks out of the little window in front of him.

"My God!"

He has seen the child and its frightful peril.

What will he do?

There is not the slightest part of a second to lose and, as if forewarned of the danger, he acts upon the instant.

There is no time to bring the engine to a stop, no time to shut off steam, no time to put on brakes. Whatever is to be done, must be done immediately.

He is on the narrow platform running along the boiler in an instant.

He does not use the hand-rail, but dashes along as swiftly as though he were on the ground.

He reaches the standards and, notwithstanding the terrible speed, lowers himself upon the pilot by the tongue or coupling in front.

Then, wedging his feet between the bars, he stands on the edge of the pilot, as firmly as if molded from the finest steel.

His long hair, his flecked beard, streaked with grey, his strange position, standing there rigid, with the glare above his head throwing him into a deep shadow, all of these unite to produce a most picturesque and most awe-inspiring sight.

Suddenly swooping down with the swiftness of the eagle's flight, the Maniac engineer bends over, seizes the child in his strong arms and snatches it from the very jaws of death.

In an instant, he straightens himself up, holding the child

aloft over his head, flooding it with a perfect glare of light, while below he is all shadow.

The child awakes and is not terrified by its strange position, but laughs and claps its hands while the Maniac engineer still holds it aloft in the light.

Good Heaven! Can he have saved it but to destroy it?

It seems about to fall. Has it then but momentarily escaped a horrible death?

Is it the man's intention to dash the poor thing to earth and crush out the child's life?

No, he has no such wish.

With the strength and will of a giant, he turns half around, his feet still wedged between the bars of the pilot, and places his charge upon the platform close by the flagstaff.

Steadying it with one hand in order that it shall not fall off, he releases the foot furthest away from him and turns around, and, stepping up, releases the other foot, and climbs upon the platform.

All this is done while he is encumbered with the child, the engine going at the rate of about fifty miles per hour.

He had held the child up so that the fireman might see it and stop the train, but the fireman did not see it, and he knew his duty too well to meddle with the engine without orders.

A shout could not have been heard, so the engineer was obliged to return to his post unaided and at great risk, for a single misstep would have caused the death of both, and leave the engine without a responsible man to take care of it.

Step by step the Maniac engineer retraces his path, and at last he reaches the cab; enters and places his charge upon his high seat.

Then the fireman sees what has been done.

"Where did you get it?"

"From the track."

"Do you know whose child it is?"

"It is mine," answers the Maniac. "I have snatched it from death." Its drunken besotted father lay like a dog at the side of the track while his pretty boy slept. Oh! the curse of drink!" he continued, gnashing his teeth in agony. "What will it not make a man do? What crimes will it not lay at his door?"

"And you will keep this child?"

"Yes, and provide for it, and so help me heaven, as God is my judge, I will never—. No—no, I will make no oaths that I cannot keep. Heaven have pity on me and save me from drink as I have saved this boy from its consequences!"

CHAPTER III.

THE CHANGES MADE BY TIME—THE RIVALS.

"You want the position of engineer upon our line?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name?"

"I am called Arthur Boynton."

"Have you ever driven an engine on any other railroad?"

"Yes, sir."

"Upon what road?"

"Lake Shore and Michigan Southern. I had an express train for six months."

"Why did you leave that road?"

"The hours were too long. There were other reasons besides."

"Was incompetency one?"

"No, sir. I cannot tell you what they were more than say that they were good."

"Have you any recommendations?"

"Yes, sir."

"I would like to see them."

"Here is one, sir."

The above conversation took place between the superintendent of one of the great trunk lines of the West and a fine-looking young man or boy who had applied for the situation of engineer, having heard that there was a vacancy.

In answer to the gentleman's inquiry as to whether he had any recommendations, he produced an envelope enclosing a sheet of letter paper.

The gentleman opened it and read to himself the following general letter:

"To all Whom it May Concern.—The bearer, Arthur Boynton, is a first-class railroad engineer, has good habits, is perfectly honest and reliable, and will be an acquisition to any one employing him.

"Boynton, late engineer."

The superintendent gazed at the paper in great surprise, and read it over again before he spoke to the applicant.

"Are you well acquainted with the person who signed this?" he asked at length.

"I have always known him."

"Is he related to you in any way? I see your names are the same."

"He is my father, sir."

"Tell me, this person, the gentleman who signs this paper, was called, and still is, I believe—by the strange name of the 'Maniac Engineer,' was he not?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy quietly.

"He was formerly in the employ of this railroad, but was discharged at last on account of his dissolute habits. I never knew that he had a son. I am afraid, young man, that you have acquired your father's habits, and that we shall have the same trouble with you as we had with him."

"You need have no fear of that, sir. I have never drank anything spirituous in my life."

"I dare not trust the son of the Maniac engineer with so important a position. The lives of our passengers, the reputation of the road might be sacrificed. I dare not risk the chance of your having inherited your father's terrible appetite."

"May I say one word, sir?" asked the lad, earnestly, but respectfully, as the superintendent arose, signifying that the interview was at an end.

"What is it?" asked the gentleman, who had been very favorably impressed with the lad's manly bearing.

"My father gave me permission to say, in case this question came up, but not otherwise, that I am his son only by adoption. He has never married and has no children, but when I was a child, he saved me from a horrible death and he has since cared for me."

"You are the child that was found on the railroad track, and was saved by little less than a miracle?"

"I am. My father has told me the whole story, but charged me never to mention it unless all other means failed."

"I am glad to hear it, for you have removed my last objection. Where is your father?"

"I cannot say."

"Do you mean that you are ignorant of his whereabouts?"

"No, sir. I do know where he is, but I would rather not tell. He does not care to have it known for the present. He is doing his best to recover the ground he lost."

"Would it assist him if you obtained the position you seek?"

"Indeed it would."

"Then it is yours. Report for duty to me at four o'clock this afternoon."

Arthur did not overwhelm the kind gentleman with profuse

thanks and fawning words, but, arising from his seat, put on his hat, and turning toward the door, said, simply:

"I am greatly obliged to you, sir, and I shall endeavor to prove myself worthy of your trust. I will be on hand. Good-morning."

At that moment a young man of about the same age as Arthur, but of entirely different appearance, walked into the office and nodding curtly to the superintendent, without removing the shiny silk hat from his head or the cigar stump from his mouth, sat down.

"I say, Barnes, I have come to ask a favor of you. There is a friend of mine wants a job. You'll give it to him, won't you?"

His air is that of a man who expects an immediate compliance with his request. That is the usual way with Mr. Mort Jewell.

"What is the position you desire for your friend?"

"Engineer. You've got a vacancy, haven't you?"

"No; it has just been filled."

"Empty it then," said the young man with the utmost assurance, that being another charming quality of his.

"I cannot. I have given my word to the person who has just applied that he shall have the place."

"What! that young fellow in black that I met going down the street just as I came in? Did you give it to him?"

"I did."

"What do you call him when he's asleep?"

"Arthur Boynton?"

"Any relation to crazy Boynton?"

"No."

"If he was, I'd tell Julian (the president of the road) to fire him out. Can't you do it, anyhow?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"I have my reasons, and it is not necessary for you to know them," replied Mr. Barnes, who detested the young upstart, although he and his father possessed considerable influence with the president and directors of the road.

"Can't you make a place then for my friend?" continued Mort, nothing abashed by the rebuff he had received.

"Who is he?"

"His name is Barak."

"Isaac Barak?"

"I believe his name is Ike, although I don't know for certain. I never call him anything but Barak," answered young Jewell, who called everybody by their surnames.

"Denominated the Turk, I believe?"

"Yes, I believe so."

"I don't want him, and I would not take him as a gift."

"He's a friend of mine."

"I am sorry for it, for he has a bad reputation," said Barnes, who might have truthfully added that he was sorry for the Turk also. "I shall have to ask you to excuse me now, Mr. Jewell, for I am very busy."

The superintendent returned to his work and began writing, and Mort, not daring to neglect the hint thus given, arose to his feet and started toward the door.

"Well, Barnes, you think it over and I'll talk to you again about it," he said impudently as he opened the door and walked out.

By a strange combination of circumstances, the two sons of Tom Jewell, the Owned and the Disowned, had within a few moments of each other, asked a favor of the same man.

The Disowned had been accepted, the Owned had been refused.

Tom Jewell was now a person of some distinction in the city, being both rich and influential, and his son seemed to have inherited all his father's bad qualities and none of the good ones possessed by the mother.

There had never been any other children and the chances were, that when the mother died, Mort Jewell would come into a very handsome property, provided his father did not manage to get it away from him.

Early that afternoon Mort met Arthur on the street in the neighborhood of the locomotive yard.

The two sons had met and they were destined to meet again often, although the Owned would be the sworn enemy of the Disowned.

"Hallo, young fellow, I hear you've got a job as engineer," said Mort. "You got ahead of me there, for I wanted to get a friend of mine in."

"First come, first served, is the rule, I believe," said Arthur pleasantly. "I had no intention of cutting your friend out, however, for I don't know him."

"You will, then, for I am going to put him on your track. My name's Jewell, son of Tom Jewell, one of the richest men here, do you understand?"

"I am happy to hear it."

"You'll be sorry to hear it one day, then. You want to make friends with me, I can tell you. What'll you take to throw up your job? I'll make it worth your while."

"I cannot throw it up."

"Then you'll get fired out. You've got a bad name, you have. Nobody by the name of Boynton can stay around here long. Friends ain't forgot about that miserable Fred Boynton yet, the crazy, drunken—"

"Take care, Mr. Jewell, don't you dare say a word against my father, or I'll—"

Fatal error!

He had acknowledged the Maniac Engineer as his father to the very person of all others who would use such an acknowledgment to his disadvantage.

"Aha! Now I have got you dead!" hissed Mort, "you and Barnes both. He lied to me. I'll have him fired out. The road won't have you, so you may as well walk. You'd better not try to take your engine out this afternoon."

"Don't distress yourself," said the young man, coolly. "Rely upon it, I will be on hand."

"And so will I, an' I tell them that you are the son of drunken, crazy Boynton, and they won't have you. You'll find that we've got sick of anybody that belongs to that low, sneaking, drunken—"

Spat!

Other objections, too vile to put in print, followed the first three, and then the torrent of abuse was suddenly checked.

"If you dare to say a disrespectful word about him or any one else whom I love and honor," said Arthur, his blue eyes flashing fire, "I'll thrash you within an inch of your miserable life."

The clock upon a neighboring church struck the last quarter, before the full hour of four o'clock, and Arthur, seeing that he had just sufficient time to keep his appointment, walked in the direction of the railroad offices, leaving his discomfited enemy to pick himself up as best he might.

The express train, with Arthur Boynton as the engineer, had just rounded a corner in the early evening, at a point some miles distant from the city, when Arthur suddenly saw an obstruction on the track right ahead of him.

He applied the air brakes in an instant and brought the train to a stop just in time to avert an accident.

He jumped from the engine and ran ahead to see what was to be done.

No rails had been broken, and with plenty of help the obstruction could be removed in a few moments.

At the instant that he laid his hand upon the first stick, he was struck by a pistol bullet and fell to the ground insensible.

Then a lot of ruffians, whose evident intention was to wreck and rob the train, rushed down the bank.

"Ah, who's going to run the engine now?" asked one of the men with a laugh.

"I am!" shouted a voice, and a tall man, with long white hair and beard, suddenly appeared in their midst.

With a few quick, sledge-hammer blows, he knocked down a half-dozen of the ruffians, and the rest fled, as the passengers began swarming from the cars.

The obstruction was soon removed and the strange man, lifting the still unconscious victim in his arms, deposited him in his seat and then took his place at the lever and opened the throttle.

"Do you know who's running this train now?" said the conductor to one of the brakemen, as they puffed away at a lively rate.

"No, who is it?"

"The Maniac engineer!"

CHAPTER IV.

A CUNNING SCHEME—THE TRAIN ATTACKED.

The train under the guidance of the Maniac engineer was speeding on its way at a forty-mile pace, Arthur lying still unconscious upon his high seat.

There would be no stopping place for an hour yet, and all that was required was to keep an even speed and to whistle at the way stations and crossings as they came along.

The train had got well under way when the fireman was hailed by one of the brakemen.

"John?"

"Well, what is it?"

"There's a lady wants to ride on the engine."

"Sho!"

"Yes, she does!"

"There ain't no room."

"She says she ain't big and won't be in the way. She is anxious to do it."

"I'll ask the engineer."

"What's the matter?" asked Boynton, turning around.

"Lady wants to ride on the engine, sir."

"Is she pretty?"

"Don't know. I'll see. Hello, Mike?"

"Well?"

"Is she pretty?"

"Guess so. She's got a heavy veil on and she's got a cloak so's the dust won't spoil her duds."

The fireman reported what he had heard to the engineer, who simply said:

"Help her over the tender."

"All right, sir."

At that moment Arthur opened his eyes and looked around him.

He saw that the train was in motion, and for a moment he could not account for it, until he beheld the strange and uncouth form of the Maniac engineer.

"I am grateful for your kindness; you—of whom I know so little."

"Never mind that. Are you able to run the train?"

"Yes."

"A young lady wishes to ride on the engine," said Boynton. "I will go back in the baggage car."

A moment afterwards a young lady of medium height, elegantly dressed, and probably pretty, though she wore a veil over her face, was assisted over the tender, and stood alongside of Arthur on the locomotive.

"I have always been crazy to ride on an engine," she said with spirit, "and I knew that you would not refuse me. You are so polite as everybody knows."

He hardly knew what to say to this pretty speech, and so only smiled, asking his vivacious passenger if she would take a seat.

"Wait a moment," she said. "See how well I can stand."

With that she raised one gloved hand and deftly cut the signal rope with a knife that had been concealed in her sleeve.

Before Arthur could interfere, the lady stooped quickly down, and with a rapid movement, uncoupled the locomotive from the tender and threw the pin on the track.

The engine shot ahead, every instant widening the breach between itself and the train.

"What have you done?" cried Arthur, seizing his passenger by the arm.

"Can't you see?" she said with a laugh.

"Was this done by accident or on purpose?"

"I rather fancy it was done on purpose," she laughed.

Arthur was alone with the young lady, the fireman having gone upon the tender at the time of the uncoupling.

His back was turned at the time, and when he had discovered what had occurred, it was too late to spring back upon the engine.

He yelled to the brakeman to clap on the brakes and stop the train.

In a few moments it had been stopped, but not by the brakemen.

At the instant the engine shot away by itself, a peculiar whistle was heard, and a man at each door of each car sprang up, jumped upon the platform and locked the door.

When the doors were locked, the men upon the platforms put on the brakes and brought the train to a standstill.

Then another whistle was heard, and a man jumped from the baggage car and walked back a few steps.

"Have you got 'em all right?" he shouted to the first brakeman, or rather the man who had usurped the place.

"Yes, the doors are all tight and we've got 'em fast like birds in a cage."

"Come this way, half a dozen of you!" shouted the man.

His order was at once obeyed.

"Go through the express car," he said; "there's some rich baggage in there, and the express safe has got over a thousand dollars in it."

"You bet we'll have it!" said a man who seemed to be second in command.

It was a well laid scheme to rob the train, the thieves making up their minds that if one way failed, another would not.

When Arthur and the Maniac engineer had foiled them, the robbers knew that another plan would be carried out.

They quickly set out to follow the train on horseback so as to be on hand when needed.

It had been settled that the train was to be robbed, and if the Turk was put in charge of the engine, there would have been little or no trouble, as he was concerned in the plot.

Two men who knew how to handle the brakes, all of them being men who had been discharged from the road on account of dissolute habits or some other sufficient grounds, were stationed in each car and told to await the signal.

Each man had a key with which to lock the doors and every one was fully armed.

The young lady who had so ingeniously asked leave to ride upon the locomotive was also in the plot and seemed to be succeeding finely.

While the leader was preparing to rifle the occupants of the passenger coaches, his second, who was none other than the notorious Turk, boarded the express car, followed by six ruffians, for the purpose of plundering and then setting fire to it.

The train had stopped and Turk and his followers, with

drawn revolvers in their hands and masks upon their faces, sprang upon the car and prepared to enter it from both ends.

At that moment the Maniac engineer slammed one door shut, and shoved a heavy chest against it, preventing the robbers from entering.

"Shoot the first man who enters!" he cried to the express messenger.

There were two brakemen, the freight agent, the conductor and half a dozen passengers in the car, besides Boynton, and these promised to offer considerable opposition to the thieves.

This car had not been secured as the passenger coaches had, the robbers evidently thinking that they would have an easy job putting its occupants into submission.

They reckoned without their host.

The strange engineer, looking like a spirit with his flowing hair and beard, was fully armed, and he sprang like fury upon the villains as they entered the rear door, the front one being fastened.

"Cut them down!" he shouted and, taking aim at the leader, he fired, bringing him to his knees.

The rest of the party were nearly all armed and they began an effective warfare upon the thieves from the doors and windows, shooting every man who could not give a satisfactory account of himself.

"To the rescue!" cried Boynton. "Release the passengers, and drive these devils away!"

CHAPTER V.

A TERRIBLE RIDE AND A TIMELY RESCUE.

How was Arthur prospering alone on the runaway locomotive with the spirited accomplice of the train robbers?

We shall see.

"What do you mean?" demanded Arthur, as he realized what the woman had done.

"Now, don't you become flurried, my young friend," she replied with a laugh, "or your wound will break out afresh, and it would be too bad to spoil your fine complexion by a fit."

"I ask you again, what do you mean by uncoupling the engine?"

"So we could ride alone. I am very good company for a young gentleman like yourself."

She stood between him and the throttle valve, and in order to close and stop the train, or reverse the motion, the boy would either have had to pass her or push her to one side.

"Stand aside, madam, if you please."

"No."

He seized her by the shoulder with both hands and attempted to put her to one side so that he might reach the levers.

Suddenly raising one hand which she had concealed in one of the pockets of her coat, the woman clapped a handkerchief to Arthur's face.

It was saturated with some pungent drug more powerful than chloroform, and one sniff of it almost took away the young man's breath.

He struggled wildly, but the young woman held the handkerchief firmly to his nostrils so that he could not breathe.

With his other hand, she pulled his head backwards, the boy being powerless to resist.

He ceased to struggle and fell back upon the seat unconscious.

With a low laugh, she spread the handkerchief out upon his face, and sprinkled it with a drug contained in a small vial she held in her hand.

"There is a down train due here in less than half an hour," she whispered, "and unless this train appears on time at the next station, it will come down this track."

Her meaning was obvious.

"They will not go on a siding unless they get a signal from this train. They will come smashing along on this track, and then? Ha, ha! What then?"

There would be a wreck and Arthur would be killed.

"There is a small chance that he may escape. I will prevent that chance."

How would she go to work?

"If he lives, good-by to my chances," she said. "I know more than some people. Mr. Mort Jewell wants him out of the way, but not for the same reason that I do."

She glanced at the fires, still burning brightly, though the steam was getting lower every moment, and then she smiled in that wicked way of hers which was so terrible.

"I can do it," she said, "and that will settle the question at once."

She threw open wide the door of the furnace, the light of the fire glaring fiercely out at her.

"Ha, ha!" she laughed. "It is hot enough yet. He will find warm friends in there."

She meant to put him in the man-hole of the engine.

She was stronger than she looked; it would not be a very difficult task for her to carry out her intention.

She lifted him from the seat as though he had been a child.

She carried him to the mouth of the yawning, fiery cavern, the heat of which was still fierce enough to scorch the flesh, and stooped down a little.

Only an instant, however, does she stand there, and then, with a sudden summoning of all her power, she prepares to carry out her horrible design.

In another second all earthly assistance will be in vain.

Hark!

The clatter of horses' hoofs upon the track!

Is assistance at hand?

Yes.

One instant and it will be too late.

The human fiend in the cab is determined that she shall not be cheated of her prey.

She draws her arms back and in the very next breath, the rigid form of Arthur Boynton will be hurled into the mouth of the furnace.

It is a moment of supreme peril.

At that critical instant, when but the smallest part of a second's delay will be fatal, the help arrives.

A pistol shot comes crashing through the glass.

It strikes the she-fiend in the shoulder.

She utters a shriek of agony and staggers and seems about to fall.

The body of our hero slips from her grasp.

It hangs upon the floor of the cab, the feet hanging over the edge.

There is a horseman at the right of the engine.

He fires another shot at her.

It whistles close to her head.

She springs from the engine on the left side of the cab.

The speed is not too great to allow her to do it.

With a laugh of scorn and derision, she bounds off into the woods that skirt the track, and is immediately swallowed up in the dense shades.

Who is this wild rider who has appeared at such a decisive moment?

The Maniac engineer.

He springs from his horse, reeking with foam and almost dead with the terrible speed at which the rider has urged him on, and in a moment he is in the cab.

The man brings the engine to a standstill and then glances around him.

Without coal it is impossible to make the run back again.

Unless it is procured at once, it will be a much more difficult affair to start up than it is at this moment, for the fires will have to be relighted.

As the engineer looks about him he sees a number of old sleepers that have been replaced by new ones.

In an instant the man is on the ground and has lifted two or three of the longest pieces into the cab.

He crams them into the furnace and sets the flames to roaring again.

Then he opens the throttle and reverses the brakes.

With a puff and a snort, the engine starts off down the track.

In goes more wood, the thick smoke pouring from the stack showing the effect the move has.

The fires roar, the steam rises, and away rattles the lone engine, with the Maniac engineer in the cab urging the iron horse to its utmost speed.

Arthur has been placed upon the seat and he slowly recovers consciousness.

He recognizes the man and sinks back again with a smile on his lips.

"Saved!" he murmurs, and again he becomes unconscious.

"Ah! Saved; but at what peril, and none too soon," mutters Boynton.

Rattle—rattle, goes the engine and before long the Maniac engineer hears the whistle of the down train, running on the same track as he is.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ROBBERS ARE ROUTED AND ARTHUR FINDS A FRIEND.

The engineer and his friends jumped from the car and attacked the Turk and his party.

Presently another party appeared on the scene.

This was the first party of thieves that had been left in the lurch by the train's starting off under the guidance of the mad engineer.

They were mounted upon fleet horses and had ridden hard and fast, expecting that the train would soon be brought to a standstill, when they could fly to the assistance of their accomplices.

They were not disappointed.

They heard the signal given by Turk and they spurred their horses on faster than ever.

The Maniac decided the question.

With a fierce shout, he hurled himself upon the leader of the mounted thieves, and shot him through the head.

The man reeled and staggered and then fell from his saddle, dead.

Boynton sprang upon the horse's back and darted away in the darkness.

"Unlock the cars!" he shouted to the conductor. "I'm going for the engine."

The conductor, backed by the express messenger, mail agent and brakemen, rushed to the first car while the passengers in the smoker were fighting the robbers.

The other passengers were released and the whole body, armed with sticks, pokers, pistols and anything that they could get their hands on sailed into the enemy.

The latter were soon driven from the field, leaving more than one of their number dead upon the ground.

The fight with the robbers had lasted for some little time after the Maniac's departure, but the villains at last sought safety in flight.

After waiting a long while, they heard the whistle of a locomotive, and soon an engine came in sight.

It was the engineer returning, and as soon as they saw him, they set up a wild shout.

The coupling-pin was found and the engine was attached to the train once more, while the Maniac briefly related the peril from which he had rescued Arthur.

"The down train is coming," said he, "and we shall have to run back and wait. Our delay caused them to come ahead."

There was no time to be lost, for the train could be heard approaching, the time for its coming being sooner than the woman had thought.

Boynton clapped on all the steam and started back, reaching a siding just as the other train swept by with a rush and clatter.

After they had passed the train went on again, and, under Arthur's careful guidance, the time was made up at the end of the journey.

At the terminus, which we shall call Chatham, by way of convenience, he had his engine run into the yard and looked after, and then going to his hotel, he turned in, as the sailors call it, and went to sleep.

Boynton had disappeared somewhere along the road, nobody knew where, and he was not seen any more.

He had evidently been satisfied that Arthur was all right, and had probably got out at one of the stopping places, and his absence had not been noticed until the next place was reached.

Arthur was not to take his train back until the morning, which would give him seven or eight hours sleep, and after reaching the other end of the road he would have about as much time to himself.

The return trip was made without anything startling happening, and Arthur was sitting at dinner when Barnes, the superintendent, walked in.

"You had quite an adventure last night, I hear," he said, "and if the trainmen speak the truth, you narrowly escaped a horrible death."

"I don't know exactly what did happen, Mr. Barnes," replied Arthur, "for I was rendered unconscious, and when I recovered my father was in the cab, taking the engine back again."

"Let me caution you, my lad, not to allude to the Maniac as your father. It may get you into trouble."

"I have always called him so."

"So you told me, although you knew he was not. I would advise you to call him Mr. Boynton before strangers. You do not know his reputation as well as I do, and, as I said before, it will get you into trouble to acknowledge him."

Arthur considered this rather hard, since this man had been more than a father to him, but he resolved to do as Mr. Barnes had suggested.

"Come down to the office before you go out this afternoon," said Barnes, taking his hand. "I want to talk to you. I am afraid there is trouble ahead, but whatever happens, be assured of my support."

Then he took his leave, leaving Arthur very much puzzled as to what he meant.

However, as the solution of the problem did not seem to be at hand, the young man finished his dinner and went out for a stroll.

About an hour before he expected to go out with the express train, he went into the company's office.

There he found the president and secretary talking earnestly with the superintendent.

"Is this the young man?" asked the first named gentleman.

"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Boynton," said the president, "there are some serious

charges made against your character, and unless you can disprove them, I shall have to ask you to resign."

Arthur colored deeply.

Some secret enemy was evidently at work trying to accomplish his ruin.

Having with difficulty attained to a responsible and lucrative position, he was to be hurled from his eminence and be compelled to seek employment elsewhere.

"May I inquire what those charges are, sir?"

"Collusion with the robbers."

"Who makes the charge, sir?"

"That I cannot say."

"Would it not be just, Mr. Julian, to tell the young gentleman why you cannot tell him?" said Barnes. "He certainly has the right to defend himself."

"You may do so if you like," responded the gentleman with a sort of mock dignity, very unlike the real article.

He was a very pompous opinionated man, and liked to be regarded with fear, as though he had been the Great Mogul himself.

"I will tell you then," said Barnes. "We do not know who makes the charges. The letter is anonymous."

"Do you consider that better than my sworn statement? I declare to you that I know nothing of the plots of those robbers, and would not be so base as to enter the employ of a corporation for the purpose of robbing it."

This was an unwitting hit at the secretary, who was not as honest as he might have been and was in favor of dismissing Arthur at once.

"Will you please show us what documents you have with you?" he said.

Arthur, supposing him to be anxious to see his references, took several papers from his coat pocket, among them a letter inclosed in a soiled envelope.

The latter was strange to the lad and he did not know what it could be.

"Please show me that letter," said the secretary. "One of the charges is that you have been in correspondence with the robbers."

Arthur handed him the letter which he opened and read aloud.

It detailed the plan of the robbery and contained instructions to the receiver, which he was to follow out in order to render the affair a success.

"This looks suspicious," said the secretary. "How did you come by this letter?"

"I did not know that I had it until this moment. You will observe, sir, that there is no address on the envelope."

"And none inside," said Barnes, hastily glancing at the letter.

"There seems to be none, indeed," said the president.

"I consider it a plot to ruin the engineer," said Barnes. "I shall retain him until I am obliged by my own convictions to dismiss him. He is the only man whom I can trust with the night express, and I am allowed to use my own judgment in these matters. I propose to use it. Consider yourself still in my employ, Mr. Boynton."

CHAPTER VII.

A NOBLE DEED AND ITS REPAYMENT—A NOVEL WAY TO TREAT A HIGHWAYMAN.

The determined conduct of the superintendent was favorable to Arthur, and the president, merely saying that nothing more would be done about the matter at present, told the

young man that he might run his train as usual that day and the next.

Just as Arthur stepped on his engine he caught a glimpse of Mort Jewell lounging about the station evidently with no purpose in view otherwise than to pass the time.

One glance at the young man's face was sufficient to give Arthur a clearer idea of the state of affairs than he had yet obtained.

He saw rage, hate, and disappointment depicted upon his rival's countenance, and, like a flash a thought came into his head.

Mort Jewell was at the bottom of the plot against him!

He was as certain of it as he ever had been of anything.

He was satisfied that it was he who had written the anonymous letter charging him with being in collusion with the train robbers.

This knowledge, or rather this suspicion, served to put him upon his guard against the vindictive young swell, and he determined to keep a sharp watch upon Mr. Mort Jewell.

"You should not carry such a tell-tale face, my lad," said Arthur to himself. "You have given me a point which I shall not hesitate to use."

Just as the train was about to start out, Mort came to the side of the engine.

"You here still, Boynton," he said insolently. "I thought they'd sack you for that affair of last night."

"To what affair do you refer?"

"Oh, you know well enough Anybody but Barnes would have kicked you out. Me and pop will fix him, then look out for squalls."

"I shall do so, never fear. I do not apprehend any danger to the superintendent, however, and I shall continue to do my duty to the best of my ability."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said Mort. "If you'll throw up your job I'll get you another, not quite so good, I admit, but then it's better than none."

"Thank you; I am satisfied with the one I have."

"You'd better think of what I say, or you won't have any."

"I am not afraid of that. Do you still want the place for your friend, the Turk?"

"He ain't my friend."

"Oh, I thought you said he was. It's well he is not, for he was one of the principal actors in that attack upon the train last night."

Mort colored with anger, and then said abruptly:

"I'll give you the worst licking you ever had in your life if you don't do what I want you to."

"I think not. You had a slight exhibition of what I can do with my fists yesterday, and I assure you I can do much better than that when I really settle down to business."

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor, and Arthur opened the throttle and rang the bell.

"Is it to be peace or war between us?" asked Mort, walking briskly alongside the engine.

"That shall be according as you conduct yourself."

"Then keep your eye peeled, for I mean business. You'll be out of a job to-morrow."

"I suppose you'll write another anonymous letter?" said Arthur.

The shot told even better than the young man had supposed it would.

Mort turned pale and red by turns, and his eyes fairly started out of his head, the blankest astonishment being depicted upon his face.

He had been rapidly walking along the platform, and by this time had reached the end of it.

He was so thunderstruck by Arthur's remark that he lost all power of motion, and became actually faint from terror.

Arthur had spoken the truth, or, that is, he had intimated

that Mort had written the first anonymous letter, which was really the case.

This had so overcome the young rascal that he felt as if he should sink through the ground.

He staggered and fell against the locomotive steps.

In another instant he would without doubt have been thrown under the wheels and killed.

It was a terrible moment.

Nothing but the utmost presence of mind and coolness upon Arthur's part could prevent a shocking catastrophe.

Without giving an instant's attention to the thought that the young man had wronged him, and would doubtless do so again as soon as opportunity offered, Arthur did the first thing that suggested itself.

With the quickness of a tiger, he sprang to the steps, reached down, and seizing Mort by the collar, literally dragged him into the cab.

The delay of a second would have cost the insolent young fellow his life.

Nothing but a strong arm, a sharp eye, well-knit frame, and above all, a brave heart, could have succeeded in such an undertaking.

The least slip, and Arthur himself would have been dragged from the engine to share the same terrible fate as Mort Jewell.

It was more than the young brute deserved, but he was saved from a horrible death.

Arthur drew him inside and laid him upon one of the seats at the side of the cab.

Then checking the speed of the engine with one hand, he dashed a cup of water over Mort's face with the other.

In a moment he saw his enemy revive, and as the engine had stopped, he lifted Mort in his arms, and descended to the ground.

Quite a crowd had followed, many having witnessed the accident, and Arthur requested that someone should go for a carriage to take Mr. Jewell home in.

Mort heard the words, and releasing himself, growled out something to the effect that he would call a carriage himself.

"You'll be sorry for this," he muttered, picking up his battered hat, which had fallen under the wheels, and trying to restore it to its original shape.

Arthur, seeing that the young man was strong enough now to go home alone, started to jump on the engine and resume the journey so suddenly interrupted.

No sooner was his back turned than Mort sprang forward with the intention of striking him upon the head.

One of the bystanders saw him, however, and seizing his arm, prevented his doing any damage.

"Let me get at him," growled Mort, with an oath. "He tried to run over me."

"No, he didn't!" shouted more than a dozen persons.

"I say he did."

"Then you lie, and that's the plain English of it," said the man who had prevented his striking Arthur.

The train moved away at this moment, but Mort was determined to have a quarrel with someone.

"Don't you dare tell me I lie," he said to the man.

"Then don't give me any occasion. That young fellow saved your life, and you turn around and blackguard him for it. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Do you know who I am?" asked Mort, angrily.

"No, I don't, and don't care, either. You're a young puppy, and that's all I want to know about you!"

"My name is Jewell—Tom Jewell's son, and if you don't get into trouble over this I'm very much out of my reckoning."

"Oh, go to bed!" was the rejoinder, and the man turned away, while everybody burst out laughing.

Mort, chagrined beyond measure, had just sense enough to see that he might as well pocket his wrath, and so he walked away, the crowd gibing and chaffing him as he retreated, and jumping into a carriage, he was quickly driven home.

He dressed for dinner, saying nothing of his mishap, and how he had owed his life to the generosity of the young man he had tried to ruin, and in the evening went out to consult with some of his cronies as to the best means of getting Arthur discharged.

Thus it was that the Owned and Unowned were at war, the former unscrupulous, the latter strong in conscious innocence.

The battle promised to be a severe one, and at the outset it was not certain who would win, the powers for evil possessed by the one seeming to more than equal the powers for good of the other.

Meanwhile let us follow the fortunes of our hero.

The train was run through without a mishap, Chatham being reached in the middle of the night, the connections made as usual and the trip being a highly satisfactory one.

When Arthur had finished his work he started for his hotel, feeling very tired and sleepy, and intending to get a good night's rest.

In order to save time he took a short cut and was half way down a dark and narrow alley, when a young man suddenly sprang out upon him, saying:

"Here, young man, give me some money or you'll be sorry for it. I'm a bad man when I'm roused."

"What do you want?" asked Arthur kindly, shaking off the young man's grip upon his collar.

"Money, and no fooling about it, either."

"What do you want it for?"

"None o' your business. I want it, and that's enough, and I'm going to have it, too."

"You must tell me what you want it for. You may really need it, and in that case you are welcome to it; but if mere robbery is your motive you won't get a cent."

"I won't? See if I don't!"

With that the fellow flew at Arthur's throat and tried to throw him down.

With a rapid motion our hero parried the blow, and seizing his assailant by the back of the neck, dragged him to a light a few yards away.

"Let me go!" said the fellow, struggling to free himself, and fearing that his captor would hand him over to the police.

Arthur drew him in front of the light, took a good look at his face, and then released him, at the same time taking a step forward.

"See here," said the young man, following him, "give me some money, for God's sake! I am starving!"

His face did not in the least belie his statement.

Want and suffering were depicted there too plainly to be mistaken.

"Why didn't you say so at first?" asked Arthur.

"I thought everybody was a villain like myself, and I have been refused so often that I got tired of asking decently, and meant to rob the next young fellow I met."

"What is your name?"

The young man hesitated.

"You need not fear," said Arthur quietly. "I am your friend. Come with me and I'll get you something to eat."

"You won't give me to the police?"

"No."

"I didn't expect this," said the other, almost crying. "I thought that everyone had hard hearts. My name is Fitz. I'm a railway fireman out of work, without money or friends."

"Come with me, Fitz, and I'll see what I can do for you. I know what it is to be out of work myself. You will find, in the long run, though, that robbery does not pay, and I'd advise you not to attempt it again."

CHAPTER VIII.

A BARGAIN AND THE FULFILLMENT OF A PROMISE—A BAD BUSINESS TO BE ENGAGED IN.

Arthur took Fitz to an eating-house which he found open, and the poor, half-starved fellow soon made a bountiful repast.

"You're the first friend I've found," said Fitz, pausing only when his terrible appetite had been appeased.

"I am afraid you went to work the wrong way. You sometimes drink?"

The question was put in a kindly tone, but Fitz flushed to the very temples.

"How did you know that?"

"By your looks."

"Yes, I did drink to drive away my troubles."

"A bad plan; you only bring them on thicker. Give it up."

"I will."

Arthur knew that he really meant it, and with a smile he said:

"That's right. Part of your troubles are due to your bad habits. Throw them off. I am a railroad engineer, and may be able to help you. Have you ever worked for this company?"

"No. I tried to get a job and they wouldn't give me one."

"Perhaps I can help you. There is some money for a lodging, and to buy a better coat. That one is hardly good enough to apply for a situation in."

Fitz looked at the speaker in astonishment.

"It is the truth," said our hero. "Dress makes all the difference in the world with most employers. I know it to be so. Now, good-night, for I must get to bed. I have to run the express out in the morning."

"You run the express?"

"Yes."

"You are not afraid to trust me with all this money? You are not afraid I will drink it?"

"I am going to trust you, for I don't think you are altogether bad."

The only answer Fitz made was to grasp Arthur's hand, and press it warmly.

"Remember, I shall trust you."

"God bless you," said Fitz fervently. "I shall not forfeit your trust. You are my best friend, and the time may come when I can repay your kindness. Good-night, and may God spare you to live many years!"

The next morning when Arthur went to the round-house he discovered at the last moment that his fireman had fallen over a sleeper and broken his arm.

There was no one that could be spared at the moment to take his place, and Arthur did not dare trust any of the brakemen, as he could not take the time to attend entirely to his fireman, having all he could do to attend to himself.

Suddenly he espied Fitz standing near, and calling to him, he explained the situation.

"I told you I would see what I could do," said Arthur, "and an occasion has happened sooner than I expected. I want you to go back with me and do the firing."

"You're a brick, and no mistake!" said Fitz.

"I see you've taken my advice," said Arthur, noticing that Fitz wore a better coat than the one he had appeared in the night before, and that he had taken great pains to look neat.

"I thought I'd try your dodge for a time," said Fitz, "and I think it's a good one."

He took off his good coat, and putting it carefully away, donned the old one, as that was good enough to work in.

The run was then made in good time and without accident.

On Arthur's recommendation Fitz was given the position as fireman on Arthur's engine until the regular man was well again, which would be for a month or more, as the poor fellow's arm had sustained a compound fracture.

Now we will leave our hero for awhile, and return to Mort Jewell, the young reprobate, who seemed following so closely in his father's footsteps.

The young scamp was fast and had spent money more rapidly than it was supplied to him, and consequently was in debt to the Jews for a considerable amount, which he did not like—not from principle, but because the Hebrews charged him such an exorbitant rate of interest.

It was Saturday night, the day after that on which Arthur had saved his life, and he was in a low drinking place in company with the vilest characters, laughing and joking, and enjoying himself generally.

Arthur, having nothing to do until Sunday afternoon, had gone with Fitz to a respectable place of amusement, and at the time were listening to one of the old comedies, and enjoying it immensely.

Mort took one of his comrades aside, and said:

"Look here, Rod, I'm in a devil of a hole, and I want you to help me out. If you do, I won't say anything about that little affair—you know what I mean. I want some money."

"How much?"

"Five hundred dollars"

"Where d'ye suppose I'm going to get it? I don't keep a bank."

"No, but you know how to get into one."

"Sh! Don't say a word about that. I can put you up to a dodge, but you must help me."

"What is it?"

"The directors of the Pine-Bluffs bank hold a meeting to-night. The bank is shaky, ain't it? Them directors ain't going to let the money that's left go to the depositors if they can help it. No, sir! They'll declare the concern bankrupt in the morning, but to-night there'll be a divvy!"

"You don't say so?"

"Yes. It's a regular skin game. Oh, I'm up to snuff, and can tell what's going on with my eyes shut. I ain't a janitor there for nothing, no, sir! I keep my ears open."

He then told Mort his plan, which was to follow one of the directors and waylay and rob him. Mort had a revolver of his own, and his friend supplied masks for both.

It was quite late when two men were hurriedly walking down a side street, as if to avoid observation.

"That was well planned, wasn't it, Max?" said one.

"You're right, Tom; it was a clever stroke of business, and all done so cleverly, too. Vote ourselves extra pay, and of course the public don't know anything about that, settle our claims first, and leave for the depositors—"

"Barely nothing."

"True for you, and all in the way of business which no one knows anything about."

The two villains hurried along, when they were suddenly met by two other villains, who threw themselves upon them, and demanded their money or their lives.

The man called Max broke away, and fled incontinently, but the other showed fight and bawled loudly for the police.

Mort Jewell, for it was he who had appeared, popped a pistol to the man's head, and thrust his hand into a side pocket, whence he drew out a well-filled pocketbook.

"Help—help! police!" shouted the man, trying to escape, or, at least, to save his ill-gotten gains.

A noise of running footsteps was heard, and the man yelled louder than ever.

"By Jove! I must get out of this," muttered Mort, and he darted off, just as a young man rushed up and struck Rod a blow that knocked him flat.

Ten minutes later Mort Jewell, while examining the wallet he had taken, suddenly uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"By jove! I've been going for the governor!" he cried. "Well, if that isn't rich!"

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED RECOGNITION, AND A TREACHEROUS GIFT—THE THREAT.

The young man who had come to the aid of the honest director, who, as we have seen, was no other than Tom Jewell, was our hero, returning from the theater.

With one blow of his fist he had knocked Rod in the gutter, and then turned his attention to the man who had been robbed.

He had recognized Mort running away, but had thought that he had been with his father when attacked, and had run for the police, but before he had a chance to speak of it Mr. Jewell said that the scamp who had run off shouting "Police!" was the one who had robbed him. Arthur's surprise may be imagined when he discovered that the fast young man had actually assaulted his own father.

"I may be able to follow him up and deliver him into custody," said Arthur, resolved to use Mort's secret against him if the young rogue persisted in his enmity toward himself.

"No, you needn't bother," said Jewell. "I'll get a private detective to work up the case."

The fact was he did not care to have it known that he had so large a sum of money in his possession, fearing that an investigation would follow.

He knew that he and the dishonest secretary of the railway company, who had been his companion at the time of the assault, could easily cover up their tracks, and that the two other thieving directors would say nothing. So on that score he felt himself safe.

He was vexed at losing the money, however, considering the way in which he had got it, and the worst of it was that it was all in cash and not easily recovered, though many of the bills were of the shaky bank's own issue.

"No—no: you needn't mind!" he repeated. "I am much obliged to you for your kind intentions, though they accomplished nothing. My God!" he exclaimed, as he got a good glance at the boy's face. "I have seen that face before. Tell me, boy, who are your parents?"

"I have none," answered Arthur, resolved not to reveal the fact of his relations with Boynton, but more on the man's account than his own, and in response to the man's questions he said that his name was Arthur, and that he had been reared by an engineer. He repeated the story of his having been snatched from the track, pretty much as our readers have heard it.

"What do you do now?" gasped Jewell at the end of his recital.

"Run the afternoon and night express to Chatham and back."

"H'm! Here," continued the millionaire, taking an elegant gold ring from his little finger, "wear this, so that I may know you again: I'm a bad hand at remembering faces, but I will remember the ring."

Here he lied, for he remembered Arthur's face only too well, though he had not seen it since the lad was a child. It was not likely that he would forget his own son.

Here again, what a strange position are these two, the Owned and the Unowned, thrown into. The Owned robs his own parent, the Unowned comes to the assistance of a father that has denied him and sought to take his life.

Even now the unnatural parent is further plotting for the lad's ruin.

At the moment that Jewell saw the ring clasp the boy's finger he was thinking how he could best compass his death.

"You are very kind," said Arthur, "and with your permission I will now go to my boarding-house."

"Very well; good-night," said Jewell, ascending the steps. "By the way," he added, turning around, "do me a favor to say nothing of this affair to-night. I'll make it worth your while."

"I should have kept silence without," said Arthur proudly. "I do not noise my doings abroad. Good-night."

Within the privacy of his own apartment—the library, not his sleeping room—Tom Jewell sat in an easy chair, muttering to himself thus:

"H'm! strange thing that. My own son turned up. Devil take that Turk! I knew something was wrong when he neglected to bring me the child's blood-stained clothes, as he said he would. I'll get Turk to do the job again, and if he fails me this time I'll jug him as sure as my name's Tom Jewell."

Two or three days after that Isaac Barak, otherwise the Turk, received a summons to come to the Jewell mansion at midnight.

"Now, you accursed scamp," said Jewell, when he saw him. "If you play me false again I'll have your heart out. I want you to put that lad out of the way once for all. If you do I'll make you rich; if not, you know where I can put you. Remember!"

Barak shuddered, and simply nodding, left the house.

CHAPTER X.

WARNED OF DANGER.

Arthur made the Sunday trip to Chatham without meeting with any adventures, and returned the next morning in safety.

On Monday afternoon he started as usual, Fitz firing for him, and everything seemed to promise a successful trip.

They were rattling along at a good pace, Arthur sitting up in his high seat, watching the indicator, and occasionally looking out of the window.

Suddenly Fitz uttered a cry of astonishment.

Arthur turned to see what was the matter and was struck at once with the strange look on the face of the fireman. He was as white as a ghost and his eyes were staring intently at something, though what it was, Arthur could not tell.

"What is it, Fitz?"

The sound of Arthur's voice seemed to break the spell he was in.

"What's the matter, Fitz? You look as though you had seen a ghost!"

"So I have, and it means danger!"

"Nonsense!"

"I tell you, Art, there is danger ahead and terrible danger at that."

"I don't deny it, Fitz, for I don't know anything about it."

"But you said nonsense!"

"I know that, but—"

"But what?"

"I did not mean that the idea of there being danger ahead was absurd. It was the other idea that made me use the word."

"The other idea."

"Yes."

"What idea was that?"

"Why, that you had seen—"

"A ghost?"

"Yes."

"I did see one."

"Pshaw, Fitz. You know better than that. There never was any—"

"Any ghosts?"

"Of course not."

"I beg your pardon, Art, I have seen—"

"Now, now, Fitz! Do you mean to tell me that you, a sensible lad, and one with a fair education, believe in any such—"

"Will you listen to me?"

"Yes, but don't talk about ghosts."

"Hear me out."

"Very well."

"Do you know what I saw in that furnace when I threw in that last shovelful of coal?"

"Fire, I suppose."

"Yes, but in the very center of the hottest part, what do you suppose I saw?"

"I'm sure I can't tell. At any rate, you looked as frightened as if you had seen the prince of evil himself."

"You may as well say that, Art, for the appearance of that face always precedes some terrible misfortune."

"Whose face?"

"The Maniac's!"

It was Arthur's turn to become pale and look surprised.

"His face?" he gasped.

"Yes, I swear to you that I saw the head and face of the Maniac engineer right there in the middle of the fire, glaring at me with a most terrible expression."

"Good Heaven!"

"It was not anger, but horror, which was depicted upon that strange face, and once seen it is never forgotten."

"You imagined it."

"No, no, I didn't. I saw it as plainly as I see you."

"The Maniac engineer?"

"Yes."

"In the furnace?"

"Yes, and in the very hottest part. It haunts me, and well I know what the evil omen means. I would rather meet the devil himself than see that accursed face, for it means—"

"Stop, stop, Fitz! You must not say anything against him."

"Why not?"

"He is my father."

"Your father?"

"Yes."

"Be that as it may, I saw it in the flames and I know too well what it means."

"What does it mean?"

"Death!"

"To us?"

"Possibly, but at any rate, it means death to some one on the train. We shall meet with an accident."

"How do you know?"

"They always follow my seeing that face in the flames. This is not the first time that it has happened."

"Has an accident always followed?"

"Inevitably."

"But you yourself have always escaped?"

"I have done so before, but I cannot always be exempt. Some day I shall be among the dead."

"If you feel so strongly about it as that, perhaps we had better stop and send a man ahead to look out for danger."

"It will be no use."

"No use?"

"No."

"But you say there is danger."

"So there is."

"Then we ought to see what it is."

"You would discover nothing. When the calamity comes, it will be all at once and unexpected. It will be useless to look out for it. I have tried it before."

"You?"

"Yes. The very last time I saw the apparition, about six months ago, I told the engineer that there was danger ahead."

"Well?"

"He sent a man, who reported that the track was in good condition and that there was nothing to fear."

"Did his words prove correct?"

"No; and I believe he made a careful search, too."

"You met with an accident?"

"Yes."

"How was it?"

"We were going along at a good speed and were passing a point where at one side there was a high, rocky embankment towering above our heads, and upon the other, a few feet away from the track, an almost sheer descent of nearly a hundred feet."

"Well, go on."

"Before we had passed the place, a huge mass of rock suddenly became detached from the bank, and crashed down upon us, throwing two cars completely from the track."

"And you?"

"The engine was dragged over the ledge, but the engineer and myself had time to jump out."

"And you think you will meet with an accident?"

"Yes."

"Do you always see his face in the fire?"

"No; sometimes it is in the air, sometimes it peers out at me from the side of the road, and sometimes, do what I will to destroy the illusion, it is the face of the engineer, although I know that it is totally unlike this terrible man."

"Why do you call him terrible?"

"Because he is. Why does he haunt me so? I know that I shall some day meet my death after seeing his face as I have seen it to-night."

"Is the sight of the real man followed by the same terrible consequences?"

"No."

"That is a comfort. Why do you not ask him what he means, whether his apparition is a warning or a threat?"

"I dare not."

"Hark!"

"What is it?"

"The down train waiting for us. She has just gone on a siding."

"Oh, is that all?"

"Yes. I am going to ask them something."

"What?"

"Is the road all right?"

"That will do us no good."

"I will ask them all the same."

Contrary to his usual custom, instead of passing the train at a rapid pace, Arthur stopped when he came up."

"How's the road behind you?" he asked.

"All right."

"Track in good condition?"

"Never better."

"Bridges all safe?"

"Sound as a dollar."

"Switchmen attending to their business?"

"They never go to sleep."

"Nothing the matter at all?"

"No."

"Thank you. Good-night."

"What makes you ask?"

"I was told that there was danger of an accident ahead of us."

"Not the slightest. There never was less to fear than at present."

"The bridge over the Black Fork is closed?"

"Yes, there's nothing going through at this time."

"Thanks, I was afraid there might be trouble."

"Not a bit."

Arthur started up again, and within half an hour he was within sight of the Black Fork drawbridge, going at a good rate.

The night had set in very dark and, although he was running at a rate which would enable him to make his connections, the speed was not so great as that he had made on other occasions.

The strange fears of Fitz had impressed him in a peculiar manner, and he could not but feel that there might be some ground for them.

He meant to do everything which the safety of his passengers required, and therefore proceeded cautiously and run no risks.

He knew not that the words of Fitz were prophetic; whatever he did could not prevent a catastrophe.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FULFILLMENT.

On swept the train around a curve, and then, rushing down a steep grade, it approached the bridge.

The latter could not be seen until within about a hundred yards, and at the curve the flagman was always stationed to give warning in case of danger.

A white flag in the daytime, and a white lantern at night, meant that everything was all right; but a red flag or lantern meant danger.

As Arthur passed the place, a white light was displayed, and he continued his course, checking his speed somewhat, but still going quite fast, the nature of the grade rendering a slower rate impossible.

As he neared the bridge, a man suddenly rushed upon the track, and waved a red lantern furiously above his head.

At the same time he was heard to cry out in an agonized voice for the train to stop.

The man was the mad engineer.

"Stop, stop, for Heaven's sake!" he shrieked. "The draw is open!"

"My God!" exclaimed Fitz, and in a moment he sank to the floor unconscious.

Arthur looked ahead and saw, to his horror, that the words of the strange being were true.

The draw was open!

Death stared them in the face, for to stop now was utterly impossible.

The flagman had played them false.

His lying signal had prevented the taking of precautionary measures.

They were now gliding swiftly but surely down the grade to the open draw.

They would be precipitated into the river.

The loss of life could not be estimated, for the train was crowded, and many would be unable to make a single effort toward freedom.

Arthur whistled for all the brakes, the sharp, short notes cutting down the car like a knife.

It was in vain. Nothing could save them.

Arthur determined to stand by his post to the last and he gallantly remained in the engine.

Some of the brakemen, looking ahead, saw their peril and jumped to the track, nearly all receiving painful injuries.

"Uncouple the cars!" shouted Arthur at nearly the last moment, shutting off all steam.

One of the brakemen who had remained, reached down, and, at the peril of his life, drew the pin that fastened the second car to the end of the one in front of it.

It required a tremendous effort, but at the right moment, when the strain was the least, he wrenched the pin from its place and the engine, tender and two cars shot ahead, leaving two cars behind.

At the same moment, another man tried to do the same thing but, losing his balance, he fell and plunged headlong into the turbulent waters of the Black Fork.

A shriek of despair went up from the lips of the Maniac, such as might have been uttered by a lost soul doomed to destruction.

At that moment, Arthur sprang from the cab, far out to the right, and dove deep down into the water.

The engine sank to the bottom in a moment and was wrenched clear of the cars, which actually floated upon the water, although they would eventually sink, of course.

This gave the occupants time to scramble out and many saved themselves by swimming to either bank of the river.

The fork, swollen by recent floods, was full of floating drift, logs, tree trunks and other rubbish, and many who could not swim, managed to cling to these fragments, and drifted down until able to make a landing.

Not a few, however, were drowned, their bodies being recovered far below the next day.

The last two cars stopped on the very brink of the chasm, and thus the lives of the remaining passengers were saved, as if by a miracle.

What of Arthur Boynton?

He dove to a great depth and arose to the surface at a point further down the stream than that at which the engine had made its plunge.

He lay in an unconscious state for some time on a piece of timber that he had grasped in his struggles.

He heard voices and then felt himself drawn up toward the bank, by some one who was evidently pulling in the timber.

Then he was lifted up and borne up a bank and into a house, the voices seeming familiar, and yet he could not identify them.

Then he was conscious of being put into a bed and falling to sleep, but whether all this happened or not, he was not certain, nor whether he had actually heard the following conversation between two persons, a man and a woman, nor how long after he had been rescued it had taken place.

"So, you've got him after all," said the man.

"Yes," answered the woman, "and by the merest chance."

"I had no idea that he had survived that plunge."

"It is better that he has, for now you can prove his death."

"Ay, that I can. You noticed the ring on his finger?"

"Yes. But for that, I would not have bothered with him, but have left him to die."

"He isn't going to, is he?"

"Not that way."

"Aha! No, indeed! Is the clock going?"

"Yes."

"And in good condition."

"Excellent."

"Good enough. That will settle the business."

"When he awakes, he must know what is going on. I would not have him die now for a hundred dollars. He must know me first."

"He won't be very likely to forget the neat little job you tried to do for him, and which the Maniac Engineer prevented."

"Curse him and his meddling. He gave me a shot in the shoulder which I will not forget in a hurry."

"He tried to stop us last night, but he did not get there on time. We fixed the flagman all right, got him drunk and then put one of our own men in his place."

"I knew you must have had a hand in it when I saw this fellow with the ring on his hand, and so sent for you."

"Glad you did."

"You and I generally work together."

"So we do. Particularly in this handsome fellow's case, we always have."

"He's good looking, surely."

There was more said, but Arthur could never remember what it was, for a blank seemed to intervene, and the next he knew, he was sitting up in bed, gazing inquisitorily about him.

All he could remember at first was his being in the accident, floating upon the river and being picked up and taken to some house.

He could not tell how long he had been there, whether it was a day or a week; but, feeling stronger again, he arose, and put on his garments, which were close at hand.

The next moment he heard voices outside which he recognized as those of the Turk and the woman who had uncoupled his engine, and afterwards tried to throw him into the furnace.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CLOCK.

At the moment that Arthur recognized the voices, the possessors entered the room.

"Aha! my lad! You are in good shape again!" said the Turk with a wicked smile.

Arthur made no reply.

"Safely recovered from the accident, I hope," said the woman.

"From what I have heard of you," replied Arthur. "I cannot flatter myself that I am safe as long as I am in your presence."

The woman smiled.

"When we met before, you were veiled and I did not see your face, but your voice was impressed upon my mind, and I shall never forget it."

"You flatter me."

"No, I remember your voice, and your face, which I now see for the first time, in order that I may some day bring you to justice."

"You are frank."

"You might as well know that I detest you and all like you, who would sacrifice human life to your hellish greed. I hope some day to see you punished."

The woman laughed.

"You want to make me angry, my boy," she said, coldly. "but you will fail. Turn your arrows of eloquence against Turk, he is more vulnerable than I."

"Say what you like," answered Barak, with an oath. "It'll be all the worse for you. It's a pretty how-d'ye-do, when a woman saves a fellow's life, for him to turn around and abuse her."

"If you have saved my life," said Arthur, turning to the woman, "I am grateful, and you have atoned for trying to take it on a former occasion, unless——"

"I know what you would say," said the woman with a bitter laugh.

"What is it?"

"Unless I still intend to take your life! That's what you mean, is it not?"

"Yes."

"That is exactly what I do intend."

"Tigress!" yelled Arthur and, springing up, he made for the door intending to escape.

He had not calculated his strength, however, and found in an instant that he had not yet recovered it by any means, and that he was yet very weak.

He reached the door, but before he could open it, he fell in a heap on the floor.

Turk rushed after him and dragged him to his feet, bestowing a blow on the side of his head that nearly staggered him.

Then the man sat Arthur in a chair and bound him securely.

The room was about twenty feet square and had three doors and two windows, and besides the ordinary furniture, there was a large, old-fashioned clock in the corner.

Arthur sat directly facing the clock, and he noticed on its dial there was a smaller one, not to mark seconds, but evidently as an alarm dial.

The single hand on this clock pointed to ten o'clock, and it was now nine.

"He's looking at the clock," said the woman. "Tell him how it works."

"With pleasure, my dear. Watch me now," said Turk, addressing the first part of his speech to the woman and the latter part to the boy.

Then he went to the clock and, throwing open the door, discovered several complicated levers and pulleys. He closed the door and opened a little closet next to the clock, disclosing a framework, evidently intended to hold a man in confinement, for there were places for his arms, legs, head and feet, and straps to hold them secure.

At that moment the closet was occupied by a dummy or effigy of a man securely fastened against the back by straps.

"You will observe," said the Turk, "that I can lift off a portion of the closet thus. Now, watch me again."

He threw open the door of the clock and began winding it up, as it seemed, but this was not the case, as he pointed out to Arthur.

"Do you see anything over in the closet?" he asked when he had finished.

Arthur looked up and saw an axe in a sliding groove, weighted by a heavy mass of iron that was suspended over the closet.

"You see that axe, do you not?"

"Yes."

"And you can see that it is held by a very stout claw of steel?"

"Yes."

"Observe this little steel lever partly projecting over the claw?"

Arthur did so.

"That lever is connected with the clockwork. Now watch me once more."

Turk moved the hand upon the alarm dial to within a few minutes of the hour already marked on the clock.

"Wait three minutes and you will see something," he said.

At the exact moment when the minute hand of the clock reached the same point as indicated upon the smaller dial, a sharp click was heard.

Then the little lever which Barak had pointed out suddenly shot forward with great rapidity.

It struck the claw clasping the weighted axe, and caused it to fly open and release the weight.

The latter quickly shot down the groove and the axe was buried to the depth of several inches in the head of the effigy.

"Do you see how it works?" asked Barak with a leer.

Arthur shuddered but made no reply.

"If that were a man in the box, he wouldn't be worth much, would he?" said Barak, "after that little toy had fallen on his pretty head."

Arthur made no answer. The man's fiendish intention was quite apparent.

"You will observe that I pull the little knife thus," said Barak, bearing down upon a lever at the side of the closet which caused the claw to descend close upon the weight, and, upon the lever's being released, carry it back to its former place.

"Now, all we have to do is to pull this pin, which opens a hole in the floor, and so our effigy slides out of place, disappears, and we are ready for business again."

"Monster!" cried Arthur. "You are worse than a savage. Do you dare tell me that you kill a man with that devilish instrument of yours, and then throw his body aside, like so much carrion?"

"If he stood in my way, yes."

"Villain!"

"Men call me Turk. Ha, ha! They do well. Now that you have seen our little game, my boy, I am going to put you in the box and show you how nice it works when a pretty boy, instead of an ugly effigy under the knife."

"God help me!" said Arthur, trying in vain to burst his bonds. "Are you fiend incarnate, that you would do this horrible thing? Help, help, help!"

The cries rang out with startling distinctness, and for a moment, both the man and the woman were terrified by them and utterly unable to act.

Then the woman sprang to her feet and clapped her hand over Arthur's mouth, smothering his cries.

His teeth closed upon her hand and drew blood.

With a cry of pain, she withdrew the bleeding member and glared at our hero with the most intense hate ever seen in a human countenance.

Turk quickly gagged the lad and prevented any further cries, while the woman bound up her wounded hand, in one side of which Arthur's teeth had met, and told the Turk to kill the young devil and make sure work of it.

The man bound Arthur more firmly to the chair, and then dragged him, chair and all, across the floor to the closet.

"You would make too much trouble if I should let you loose so that we could tie you up in good shape," laughed the Turk, "and we will let you remain in your chair. It will work just as well though, exactly as well."

The woman came to his assistance and the two placed the chair containing our hero directly under the trap in the closet, through which Arthur had seen the axe dropped with such terrible rapidity.

Was such a fate to be his?

How long would the fiends give him to live—a few minutes or an hour?

Had his screams for help been heard?

Would assistance arrive?

Where was the Maniac, and would he, as he had many times before, come to his aid ere it was too late?

Where was Fitz? Alive or dead?

These and a myriad other questions, the lad asked himself while he sat there, while Turk was moving about the room, engaged in different mysterious ways, which Arthur could not understand.

Then he went to the clock and turned the hand on the small dial two or three places ahead.

"If you will look up," he then said to the young man, "you will see a looking-glass in front of you."

Arthur saw that it was so and that the clock face was reflected upon it, but not reversed as he supposed it would be.

"For your benefit, I have put up a couple of mirrors, so that you can see how fast the time goes. It will make it all the more pleasant."

"Oh, the diabolical ingenuity of the man!"

"You will notice," he continued, "that the indicator is put at five minutes past two, so that you have little more than four hours to wait."

Once glance at the dial showed Arthur that the man had spoken the truth.

"This is a striking clock, my friend, and if you get tired looking at the dial, you will know when the full hours, halves and quarters are up, for I have wound all the striking apparatus for you."

"You will know at two o'clock that there are still five minutes left; and can prepare yourself for what is coming. I don't like to take you by surprise, you know. The shock might be bad for your nerves."

He knew that there would be an irresistible fascination in looking at the clock, which would prolong the time a hundred-fold, and make him suffer again and again the agonies of death, long before the merciful axe would fall and bring deliverance.

When all his horrible preparations had been made, Turk fastened all the doors and windows, and then departed with the woman, leaving the poor lad to his fate, while the minutes dragged by on leaden feet.

CHAPTER XIII.

A CHAPTER OF SURPRISES.

How slowly the minutes passed as Arthur sat watching the reflection of the clock.

By fixing his mind upon other things and not looking at the clock, Arthur managed to make the time fly faster, and when twelve o'clock struck he was astonished to find how quickly it had passed.

Two hours more to wait.

He tried to release his hands, but they had been fastened behind him and the cords so arranged that the more he tugged the tighter they were drawn.

Then a wild hope started through his brain.

Perhaps he could throw himself upon the floor, out of the way of the knife, and thus escape the danger.

He tried to move his feet so as to tip the chair over, not caring how many bruises he received so long as he got away from the knife.

This attempt was as fruitless as the others.

Turk had secured the chair to the floor of the closet, so that it could not be moved an inch in any direction.

There seemed now no earthly hope of getting away, and still the boy would not despair, but set his wits to work to devise some plan by which to cheat the villains.

Truly his situation was a critical one.

Quarter-past twelve came, half-past, three-quarters, one o'clock, quarter-past one, half-past, and still he sat there, unable to move hand or foot or cry aloud.

Quarter to two o'clock!

Heaven! is there no hope?

Oh, if someone would only come and release him!

He cannot hope for that, as no one knows where he is, and

for all he may know his friends are themselves powerless to aid him.

It is more than likely that Fitz had perished at the time of the wreck, as Arthur had seen him unconscious on the floor of the cab when he made his own mad plunge.

And the Maniac Engineer? Would he prove the friend he had always been, and bring deliverance at last?

Arthur dared not hope it, for he had a vague fear that the man had been killed.

Minute by minute the hand makes its tardy way over the dial, as if exhausted and unable to go a hair's breadth further.

Good Heaven! has the clock stopped?

No, though it seems so, so slowly moves the hand.

Two o'clock!

The notes, ringing clear and sharp upon the stillness, have a solemn sound, and the poor boy's heart almost stops beating.

He is wishing now for death—not dreading it—and the hand moves more slowly than ever.

Only five minutes longer!

The poor fellow closes his eyes and utters a prayer for strength to bear the agony of death.

One minute passes, and then another, and he knows by the sounds over his head that the bolts sustaining the weight are, one by one, being withdrawn.

He breathes a prayer, and resigns himself to his fate, calling on God for forgiveness of all his sins.

Hark!

There is a step outside the door.

Can it be the two human fiends returning?

No, for someone, whoever it is, tries the door.

Turk would not do that.

It is a friend!

The door is pressed against; it yields—it flies open.

Fitz!

Thank Heaven!

Fly, Fitz, fly, for you have but one minute in which to act!

Even now you may be too late. Hurry, for the love of Heaven!

He is at Arthur's side in a second, and cuts the fastenings of the gag.

"Pull me away, chair and all, Fitz, for God's sake! The axe will fall in one minute!"

Fitz gives a hasty glance at the clock, sees the hellish device, and the trembling weight, slashes the cords securing the chair legs, and drags it with its burden away from the axe.

Click!

Whizz!

Thud!

The minute hand has reached the point indicated on the small dial.

There is a sharp sound as the steel bolt shoots out and releases the claw which supports the weighted axe.

There is a whirring sound, and with awful swiftness the knife rushes down the slide, through the opening, and striking the floor with a heavy sound, makes a deep gash in the wood.

Fitz has not been an instant too soon, for as he pulls Arthur clear of the closet, the long-delayed moment has arrived.

He releases the boy in a moment, and supports him in his arms.

"Thank Heaven I came in time," he said. "I knew nothing of this diabolical machinery, and might have come just a minute too late."

"I heard you outside," said Arthur, "and hoped it was a friend, but could not attract your attention."

"I saw you through the key-hole, and knew you were in some trouble, but could not tell exactly what. I saw you were gagged, and determined to waste no time over getting in."

"How did you know I was here, in the first place?"

"I will tell you presently. We must get out of here just as soon as we know how, for without doubt the villains who put you here will come to view the result of their devilish contrivances."

Arthur was still weak, and Fitz had to support him with one arm, as they hurried from the room.

Through the hallway and down the stairs they went hurriedly, and had reached the passage below leading to the outer door when a startling sound was heard.

The shrill notes of an alarm bell ringing upon the air.

Instantly a door above was heard to open, and then there was a hurrying of footsteps.

Then there came a shrill scream, and a woman was heard calling for Turk.

At that moment the villain himself appeared right before the two young men.

At sight of Arthur he uttered a furious oath.

"Put down that boy!" he said to Fitz, "or I'll blow the roof of your head a mile high!"

He looked so fierce with his swarthy complexion, black beard, red handkerchief tied around his head, and glittering eyes, that Arthur trembled.

Fitz's answer was short, sharp, and decisive.

Supporting Arthur with his left arm, he let out with his right, and took Turk under the ear.

The effect of the blow was electrical.

It knocked Barak off his feet, and stretched him insensible in the furthest corner of the hallway.

He lay as if stunned, and Arthur feared that he had been killed.

He had not.

Such men do not die easily, more is the pity, and Turk was destined to cause our hero considerable trouble before he got through with him.

Fitz made for the door, but at that moment another actor appeared upon the scene.

This was the young woman whom Arthur had first met in such a singular manner.

She ran down the stairs with the lightness of a fairy, and stood between the door and the two boys.

"Stop!" she cried.

Her command was emphasized by a glistening revolver which she held in her hand, and Arthur did not for a moment doubt that she would use it if her wishes were disregarded.

Turk was beginning to move.

"Stand aside, Kate, or I won't hesitate a minute!" said Fitz, showing his knife.

The woman obeyed, and the two lads passed swiftly outside, and ran down the road.

"Who is that woman?" asked Arthur.

"My sister!" was the brief reply.

CHAPTER XIV.

ARTHUR RECEIVES IMPORTANT INFORMATION, AND GIVES MORT JEWELL A SURPRISE.

Once in the road, Fitz ran hastily along for a few rods, and suddenly, to Arthur's surprise, unhitched a horse to a light wagon standing hidden by a lot of bushes.

Calling to Arthur to hasten, he lifted him into the buggy, which was just big enough for two, and then, jumping in himself, took the reins and drove off at a quick trot.

They soon struck into the main road, and the spirited animal made excellent time, the track being in good condition, and the horse comparatively fresh.

"Do you mean to tell me that that woman is your sister?" said Arthur at length, when about a mile away from the scene of his miraculous rescue.

"Yes."

"I am sorry for it."

"Why so?.."

"Because she is a fiend incarnate, and I had begun to like you first-rate. I do yet, for you have saved my life, but——"

"Well?"

"I wish you were not her brother."

"So do I."

"This is most strange!"

"Let us talk of something more agreeable. The subject is a painful one, and I hate to think of it. Kate has caused me no end of trouble by her spitefulness, though she never dare work openly against me. As long as I am on your train you need fear nothing."

"How long is it since that accident?"

"Three days"

"How did you escape?"

"I was thrown into the water before the engine sank, and was in that way brought to consciousness. I clambered upon a rock and remained there until taken off by the boatmen."

"And the Maniac Engineer—what did you hear of him?"

"He nearly went crazy when he heard that you were missing, and searched the river for miles. Your hat was found, and they said that you were dead."

"Did he believe it?"

"He was obliged to."

"Who is running the express now?"

"He is."

"Impossible!"

"Nothing of the sort. He applied to Barnes the next day, and had a long talk with him, and the result was that he is now running that train. You never saw a more sober man in all your life."

"How did he learn of the attempt to wreck the train?"

"By accident, and too late to be of any service. They have caught one of the men, but he will divulge nothing."

"Isaac Barak was one. I remember hearing him say so."

"The detectives are on Turk's track now, and he had better look out, for I shall give all the information against him that I can."

"And Boynton is running my train?"

"Yes. Tom Jewell and the secretary both kicked against it, but Barnes got Julian on his side, and declared he was going to run the road to suit himself, and not a parcel of fellows whose names were not above suspicion."

"What did he mean by that?"

"I don't know; but they say that the failure of the Pine Bluffs Bank this week was rather mysterious, and that Tom Jewell and the secretary made a nice little pile out of it, although Jewell says he was robbed of the trust funds by some daring thief."

"But I say, Fitz, old fellow, you haven't told me how you came to find me out."

"Haven't I?"

"No."

"You want to know, I suppose?"

"Of course I do."

"I don't know whether I ought to tell you."

"Nonsense. I must know."

"Well, if I must, all right, but I am afraid you won't think as much of me as you do now."

"Pshaw! go ahead. I'll warrant that I'll think a great deal more of you. You are too modest."

"In the first place I intercepted a letter of Mort Jewell's," said Fitz. "A boy brought it just after I had had the fuss

with him, and asked me where he was, saying that somebody had told him Mort was in the yard.

"I suspected mischief, though why I couldn't tell, and I told the lad to give me the letter, and I would hand it to him, as I expected to see him in a few moments. At first he objected, but I charmed him."

"Charmed him?"

"Yes; I looked him straight in the face, and, in a low tone, told him to give me the letter. Do you know that I am something of a mesmerist?"

"No, indeed."

"I am, though I cannot succeed with everybody. I couldn't charm you any more than I could fly, but I put that boy completely under my control in about two seconds, and made him give me that letter as quietly and calmly as though it belonged to me."

"You amaze me."

"I amaze myself sometimes. When I got a chance I opened the letter, which had come through the mail, and was marked 'private and immediate,' read it, and learned where you were."

"Who wrote it?"

"Turk. He told Mort that if he wanted to see some fun to drive down to-day and be at the house before two o'clock, as the 'troublesome young engineer' was going to be slaughtered at five minutes past."

"Then the scoundrel had contemplated and arranged the whole thing beforehand."

"Most likely, and he will be wondering why Mort did not turn up and see the fun."

"I'll make fun for him some day, see if I don't."

The Disowned plotting against the Owned; singular circumstance.

Two sons of the same father at bitter enmity, neither knowing his relations to the other. Was there ever so strange a combination?

"That is the whole business," concluded Fitz. "I knew there was trouble ahead. I felt somehow that you were alive, although Boynton believed you dead. All is fair in war, and I stole the enemy's dispatches. Don't blame me, Art, for without that I could never have saved you in God's world."

"Blame you, Fitz? No—no! I can never do that. Anything is fair against these people, and I could tell you things that would open your eyes."

"I don't doubt it. The men we are fighting against are shrewd, unscrupulous villains who will use any and every weapon they can get hold of. We must fight them on their own ground."

"That is exactly what I mean to do," said Arthur, "and I shall not wait for them to attack me, either."

They were by this time in the city, and after delivering his horse and buggy, Fitz went immediately to the offices, there being yet about forty minutes to spare before the night express started.

When within two squares of the place, they suddenly met Mort Jewell.

"Halloo, Cheeky!" he said to Arthur. "Thought you'd kicked! You won't have the upper hand of me very long. I can tell you something that'll astonish you."

"I can beat you," said Arthur.

And leaning over suddenly, he hissed in Mort's ear:

"I know who robbed Tom Jewell the other night!"

He quickly left the spot, and the two young men continued their walk.

They soon reached the offices, and both Barnes and Mr. Julian, who happened to be present, were delighted to see Arthur, having feared that he was dead.

"Will you run your train this afternoon?" asked the superintendent, when Arthur had told him briefly of his adventures.

"I will be on hand!"

"Good. Will you step in here for a moment?" leading the way into his own private office.

"My boy, what is going on here. What do you know of the secretary of this road?"

"Nothing."

"But you gave us the impression the other day that you knew a good deal, for he colored visibly at a certain remark you made, and now hates you most tremendously."

"I only know that he is suspected of dishonest practices, and I did not know even that then. He should not carry his conscience on his sleeve, or it will be apt to get hurt."

"Very good. Now here is a piece of advice: Make that man think you know everything, and before long we shall wing him. Julian and I are making a strong fight, for we both detest the Jewells, and would like to see them 'fired,' to use Mort's elegant expression."

"I will aid you, Mr. Barnes, and if there is going to be a fight call on me, and I will be on hand!"

The two went out, for it was time for Arthur to go to the yard, and the first person they saw was Tom Jewell himself, swelling with importance.

"Ah, Barnes," he said, "I want to talk to you. Halloo; that boy turned up again?"

Arthur started for the door when Jewell called him back.

"Where are you going?"

"To look after my engine."

"I don't want you to run an engine any more, my boy. I've got a better job for you. You know that I promised to do well by you for your assistance the other night."

"You have not kept your promise, Mr. Jewell," said Arthur, boldly.

"What do you mean?"

Arthur took the ring from his finger and placed it in front of the millionaire.

"I do not need to state the particulars here, sir," he replied calmly. "I know how to keep my mouth closed. There is your ring. I have no further need for it. The hour has struck and I am still safe."

Jewell turned livid and gasped for breath, and Arthur had reached the door again before he could utter a sound.

Jewell had heard of the devilish device by which the boy was to have been sacrificed, and when Arthur had said: "The hour has struck and I am still safe," he well knew to what the brave young fellow alluded.

"The fiends take it!" he muttered, as he went into the street. "The brat knows everything. How cool he was when he handed me that ring. Beards me to my very teeth! By George, I can't help admiring his spirit. Wish Mort were more like him, the young vagabond."

He walked rapidly toward his elegant residence, and presently muttered to himself:

"Blow me if I ain't afraid of the young scamp! What can ail Turk to bungle so? The job must be done, or it'll be all up with me. Mort fancies he's coming in for a good slice when I die. He, he, won't he be sold?"

The Maniac Engineer was very much surprised to see Arthur, and readily gave up his charge to the boy, Fitz having meanwhile given him a brief account of how Arthur had so nearly come to his death.

Arthur took the train out, and brought it back the next day without any incident worthy of note, and also the next

CHAPTER XV.

TRouble AHEAD—A BIT OF ADVICE.

Mort staggered as if he had been shot, and turned pale and red in succession.

day, which was Friday, returning on Saturday morning, when he would have nothing more to do until afternoon of the next day.

Soon after breakfast Sunday morning Fitz appeared at Arthur's boarding-house, and asked him to go for a walk out into the country.

They were walking rapidly along the hillside an hour later, looking at the city in the distance, its tall spires bathed in sunlight, when a step was heard, and a form sprang out from among the trees.

It was the Maniac Engineer.

"Beware!" he cried. "Go not a step further in this path, or it will be your death!"

Was the man mad?

"What do you mean?" asked Arthur.

"I mean that below there in the valley is an ambush. Strike at once for the road."

"But that is the longer way, and we have no time to lose," said Fitz.

"I tell you that if you go this way you will meet your death. A party of the outlaws are waiting below, and will fire upon you as soon as you reach the valley."

"How did you discover them?"

"It matters not. They are there, believe me."

"But we will be late."

"Follow me; I know a short way which will take us around them. They do not know that I saw them and overheard their devilish plot."

He started down the hill at a quick run, and the two lads followed him.

On reaching the road he struck into a hidden path, and soon reached the bed of an old stream, which ran under overhanging trees, and led along an underground passage.

It was too dark to see, but they could hear the leader's footsteps, and followed him rapidly.

Presently he paused at a place where it was dark as pitch, and reaching up, he pushed something aside, letting in a little light.

"We are in an old mill," he said. "Scramble up, and I will follow."

He then assisted them to climb up, when they found they were in an old building long disused.

Then they pulled him up, and closing the trap he led them into the road, whence they could see the city.

"You are safe now," he said. "Make your way quickly toward home."

"And you?" said Arthur.

"I go to unfathom a life's mystery!"

With these strange words he disappeared in the building, and the boys took the road to the town.

CHAPTER XVI.

MORE EFFECTS OF A CHANGE OF BASE—FATHER AND SON.

As Arthur was about to step aboard of his engine, Fitz having fired up, Mort Jewell appeared.

He looked very much astonished at seeing his rival and turned deathly pale.

"I thought you had been killed!" he stammered.

"Did you? The wish was father to the thought, most likely."

"It's a wonder they will let you stay on the road. My dad is going to have you given the sack in the morning."

"Has he found out who robbed him yet? Perhaps I can tell him."

"Do you mean to threaten, you impudent young upstart?" cried Mort, now blushing scarlet.

"I shall defend myself, that's all. Have you seen Wicked Kate lately?"

"Confound you and Wicked Kate!" uttered Mort, with an oath. "See here," he added in a whisper, "you are more fly than I gave you credit for. I can put you up to a good thing if you will leave the road and give a friend of mine a chance."

"If you mean Turk, it is no use. There's an indictment out against him."

"It won't be served."

"Why not?"

"This in confidence, mind?"

"All right."

"He's got the governor in a box and can tell something which the old man wouldn't want known. It isn't him, it's another fellow called Jamison."

"Rodney Jamison?"

"Yes."

"As big a scamp as Barak, every bit."

"That's all right but we can make a deal of it. You know Clarkson?"

"The secretary? Yes, I know him."

"Between me and you, he's an infernal scamp."

"I know him as well as you do, Mr. Mort Jewell, and I know some other scamps in that same railroad corporation. Your governor, as you call him, will tell you who I mean."

"Sh! That's all right. The old man has a big finger in the pie, and I'm laying to get some of the plunder. You just ask Barnes to give you a sit in the office."

"Well?"

"He'll give it to you, because he's on the watch for the rogues. Then me and you can either go on the honest racket or make a deal with the other side."

"I prefer the honest myself."

"I know you do. Now, listen; me and you have got to be friends. I am sorry that I treated you so rough, but then I didn't know what a brick you were."

"All aboard!" shouted the conductor.

"I say, Drake," said Mort to the conductor, "I'm going to ride with Boynton on the engine to Chester. It's all right, ain't it?"

"Yes," answered the conductor, who was afraid of offending the son of one of the magnates of the road.

The train was already in motion and Mort's foot had been on the step all this time, so he jumped in and took a seat as they went whirling over the road.

Arthur did not feel quite satisfied at having Mort with him, though, to tell the truth, the young man had no evil designs upon Arthur this time.

He really wanted to go to Chester, and also desired to talk with Arthur; but, Fitz being present, he could not say all that he wanted to.

They reached Chester about seven o'clock, and Mort promised to be on hand the next morning and go back with Arthur.

Just as Mort was getting off, he turned and whispered in Arthur's ear, so that Fitz could not hear him:

"I'm going to brace the old man now, and if he don't cotton to my little game, over goes the wagon."

With this highly lucid remark, Mr. Mort Jewell departed.

He walked up the main street of the town and, after an interval of ten minutes, turned off into a wide avenue where there were many elegant residences, all surrounded by large gardens and trees.

One of these was Tom Jewell's country seat and Mort swung open the little gate at the side of the path, and, walking up the graded drive, ascended the steps to the mansion.

He rang for admission.

"Where's his royal highness, Adolph?" said Mort to the footman.

"Ef you mean your fazer, he ees at hees dinnaire," answered the dignified footman. "Sal I tell heem zat you haf arrived?"

"No, he'll be up, I suppose, when he has had his hash," answered Mort, desiring to shock the elegant flunkie, which he certainly did.

Throwing his overcoat and hat across a chair, Mort put his silk hat on top of an exquisite statue of Venus, standing on a pedestal, and then strolled through the drawing room and entered his father's library.

His father's private note-book lay close at hand, and the son took it up and began reading the contents.

He was deep in its pages when Jewell entered, wearing a gorgeous dressing-gown and slippers.

"Pon my life, Mort, you've got cheek enough," said he.

"I came fairly by it, dad," answered Mort coolly. "Sit down, governor. I've come up from town to talk to you. How's Pine Bluff stock?"

"Poor enough."

"You and Clarkson made a good haul that night."

Jewell flushed up to the roots of his hair.

"What do you mean?" he gasped.

"Take it easy, old gentleman," said the young scamp. "You were robbed that night, weren't you?"

"Yes, confound it."

"And the thief gave away the whole business to me. Nobody else knows it."

"Sure?"

"Yes, you needn't be afraid of me. You know I won't squeal. Have you got a couple of hundred you can let me have to-night. I am rather short."

"You're getting awfully extravagant, Mort," said the other, tossing him a roll of bills.

"I am going to reform, pop. Tell you what we'll do. Come in on my side. Me and Julian are going to blow on Clarkson. You do the same. He daren't give you away, anyway, and we'll get the credit of being honest. After that you can keep on getting rich out of the company the same as you have done, and not be suspected."

"What do you mean by such talk as this?" asked Jewell, angrily.

"That's all right, pop. I know what I'm talking about. I can read, I guess. Tell you what, there's going to be a bust and I know it. Which side are you going to take?"

"The side I can get the most money from."

CHAPTER XVII.

REVELATIONS AND CONFIDENCES—THE MURDER IN THE WOODS AND THE SILENT WITNESS.

"Spoken like a little man, pop," said the incorrigible Mort. "You see I'm solid on facts. We all know what Clarkson is, and if we can get more by going with him, all right. The virtuous dodge will pay better, though."

"I think you're right, Mort, as long as there's got to be a discovery. We'll make the secretary a scape-goat and cover up our tracks, for if they were to know all, your fortune would be swept away."

"That's it, old man, and why in thunder didn't you let me in on this long ago. I might have busted up your plans, because I know enough to do it."

"Never mind, Mort, I know what your plans are now, and something has really got to be done. But I can tell you this: We must work lively or it will go to smash."

"I know that well enough, but now there's another thing I want to talk about."

"What is it?"

"I want you to let up on young Boynton. He's a friend of mine."

"Boynton?"

"Yes, the young engineer. Arthur is his name."

"Seems to me you have changed about pretty suddenly. Last week you were plotting his ruin."

"See here, Mort," said Jewell, earnestly, leaning across the table and talking in a whisper, "that young cub has got to be done away with."

"Why?"

"Because he will ruin us, otherwise—you in particular."

"How?"

"You know, don't you, the provisions of your grandfather's will?"

"Some of them."

"You know that if I had any children by a former marriage, neither you nor I will get a penny after your mother's death, but that it all goes to her relations."

"Yes, I know that."

"Well, then, this boy, Arthur Boynton, or Arthur Arthur, whatever his name is, is my own son by my first wife."

"Whew! the devil!" and Mort drew a long breath. "Why in time didn't you say so before?"

"I didn't suppose that you were going to be such a fool as to make him your friend."

"Stop a moment, dad. He does not know this?"

"No."

"Does any one?"

"Turk and Rod Jamison."

"We must silence them. I know enough about Rod Jamison's antecedents to keep him quiet."

"Unfortunately, Turk knows more about me than I care to have him tell."

"What about this boy, after the other fellows are out of the way?"

"He thinks Boynton is his father."

"Sure?"

"Yes. I didn't know for a long time that he had been saved. He would not tell me anything himself, but I found out. Boynton rescued him and brought him up as his own son."

"Do you really suppose the young fellow think differently, dad?"

"I can't tell."

"He acknowledged the Maniac to be his father before me, but we will have to find out whether he really knows or not. If he don't——"

"Well?"

"There's only old Boynton to get rid of."

"A bottle of rum will do that."

"I got caught at that the other day. We will have to try some other plan."

"If you must have the young cuss as a friend, I suppose you must, and so long as he don't know his parentage, all right; but if he does and once lets the world know it, away goes your fortune."

"It can't do him any good. He can't get any of it."

"No, but he might do it from spite."

"He would not, but Turk and Rod would. They are the fellows to be gotten rid of, governor."

"How are you going to do it?"

"I'll think up a plan."

"Good, where are you going?" for Mort had risen.

"Out for a stroll. I'll be in before eleven. I'm going back on the Chatham express in the morning. Give me a latch key."

Provided with this, Mort put on his coat and hat, stuck a few of the 'governor's' cigars in his pocket and went out.

"How lucky I asked Rod to meet me at Dan's!" muttered Mort, as he sauntered along.

"Dan's" was a low drinking and gambling saloon situated in the middle of a wood, about a quarter of a mile from the railroad track, and two miles from where Mort then was.

Thither Mort now turned his steps, muttering to himself:

"Hope he hasn't got there yet. It won't do to be seen in his company. Hold up. I'll fix it."

He turned and went into the house, making considerable noise, taking care that the servants saw him.

Then he went in and told his father that he felt tired and was going to bed.

He went up to his room, locked the door, lit the gas, divested himself of his clothing and went to bed.

He immediately rose again, however, leaving the bedclothes tumbled up, dressed himself again and, going to a bureau drawer, took out a rope ladder made of silk, very light and exceedingly strong.

Then he put out his light and, raising the window on that side of the house where it was shadow, secured the ladder to the ledge and let himself down to the ground, first closing the window.

With a quick jerk, he detached the end of the ladder, rolled it up, put it in his pocket, and made his way hurriedly toward Dan's.

After awhile he looked at his watch.

"No time to lose," he said. "I must be there first."

Half an hour later what do we see?

A little clearing in the woods, in the center of which is a rude house, from which comes the noise of drunken revelry.

A man approaching the house through the trees.

A muffled figure suddenly rushes up and strikes the figure in the back with a knife.

A brief struggle, the assailed man clutching wildly at the air, and pulling the assassin's hat from his face.

Then a heavy fall and the dead body of a man, foully murdered, lying on the ground, while the other picks up his hat and steals away.

A sudden light from the house reveals an old woman standing motionless not ten feet from the body, against a tree trunk.

She had been hidden all this time, had seen the crime committed and the person who did it, and knows what will cause his death on the gallows if she is minded to tell it.

There is some one coming from the house and she steals away so as not to be seen.

The body is not found until morning, and then there is a great stir made about another mysterious murder, several men being arrested on suspicion, while the real murderer walks the streets all unsuspected.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING.

On Monday, after Arthur had returned to the city, he found a note from Mr. Barnes, demanding his immediate presence at the office.

When he went in Barnes took him at once into his private room.

"I suspect mischief," said the superintendent, without further parley. "Can you act promptly if I send you word?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you understand cipher writing?"

"Some kinds."

"Take this key, and whenever I should send you a telegram act at once upon the advice I give you."

"I will do so."

Arthur then took his leave, wondering what the important business was which required such prompt action.

In the afternoon he took his train out as usual, Fitz going along, though Arthur said nothing about the conversation with Mr. Barnes.

Just before he reached Chester a block of wood was thrown into the cab window, narrowly escaping his head.

A note was tied to it, enclosed in a telegraph envelope.

Arthur tore the envelope open, and found a message written upon one of the regular telegraph blanks.

Arthur produced his key, and translated the dispatch as follows:

"Clarkson has decamped with a large amount. Has gone off on the other road. Intercept him at Chester, if possible, and detain him until we can reach you. He will not stop if he can help it." Barnes, Supt."

The other road alluded to passed a few miles to the eastward of the terminus of Barnes' road, and crossed it at Chester, where all trains usually stopped.

The other train generally got there ahead of Arthur's, and went on, after leaving passengers to be transferred.

It was necessary to clasp on all steam in order to reach Chester in advance of the other train, and Arthur issued his orders to Fitz at once.

"Slap in more coal, Fitz; we've got to catch that fellow!"

Pretty soon the other train came in sight.

"She's late," said Arthur. "We'll catch her yet."

The engineer of the other train whistled for Arthur to stop until they had made the station, but the latter kept ahead.

"What are you doing?" cried Fitz. "You will run into them!"

"Wait a moment."

Arthur suddenly reversed, and as the tension upon the coupling pin between tender and baggage car was withdrawn, he pulled it out and then rushed ahead, scrambling back quickly to his place.

The engineer of the other train had been bribed by the defaulter not to stop at Chester, and therefore Arthur meant to make time.

There was now no time to lose, and the engine went bowling along at a tremendous rate.

Arthur saw there was no help for it, and that there must be a collision, but he meant to save as many lives as possible.

He had calculated the distance and saw that the other train could not stop in time, so calling to Fitz, just before they reached the crossing, he sprang to the ground, running ahead several yards so as to save a fall.

Fitz did the same, and neither of them received any hurt.

The train on the other road just grazed the tender of Arthur's engine, and threw it across the track, damaging their own pilot and coming to a sudden stop, the engineer having already shut off his steam.

Arthur's engine stopped of necessity, but the track was littered with rubbish, and partly torn up, two hours' hard work being at least necessary before the other train could go on.

The engineer swore, and the passengers came swarming out, and at that moment Arthur appeared.

"Arrest that man!" said the irate engineer, to a constable, and pointing at Arthur.

"Hold on a minute!" cried the lad, catching sight of Clarkson, who was making away in the darkness with a valise in his hand. "Arrest that man yonder!"

"What for?" asked the officer.

"Stealing the funds of the railroad company of which he is the secretary."

The lad made one tremendous bound, eluded the officer, and caught Clarkson by the coat-tails.

The latter drew a revolver and fired, taking Arthur in the shoulder.

He held on, nevertheless, and dragged the villain to the ground.

Then the constable came up and arrested them both.

"What does this mean?" demanded Clarkson.

"It means you are a thief, and that I have caught you," said Arthur.

"You lie!" blustered Clarkson.

"That won't do!" said the constable. "I have just this minute received a message, handed me by the telegraph operator on this road, not the Chatham one, to detain you, if possible, on suspicion."

"Then arrest Tom Jewell," said Clarkson, "for stealing the funds of the Pine Bluffs Bank. If I'm to be nabbed I won't be the only one."

Arthur got a gang of men at work immediately, and at the end of an hour's time much of the damage had been repaired, when the whistle of a locomotive was heard, and the engine was seen coming along the Chatham road from the direction of the city.

It stopped before it reached the train, and Barnes, Julian, and Tom Jewell sprang out.

"Have you got him?" asked Barnes.

"Yes."

The party went at once to the lockup, where Barnes preferred a formal complaint against Clarkson, and demanded that he be given up.

The constable demurred, but Julian produced a requisition, and the man was delivered to the others, who had brought an officer with them.

"I denounce that man!" said the discomfited secretary, pointing to Jewell, "as having been in the plot as well as myself."

"Don't you wish you could prove it?" sneered Jewell.

"Examine his books, gentlemen, and you will see a glaring discrepancy between them and his cash."

"On the contrary," said Barnes, "everything is perfectly correct, and Mr. Jewell himself offered to show his books before we asked him."

"Then the scoundrel has made restitution."

"Of that we know nothing," remarked the president, in his lordly way. "It will do you no good to throw mud at Mr. Jewell while your own hands are so dirty."

"I see it all. You are trying to make a scapegoat of me, to cover up your own rascalities; but I'll be even with you yet."

"This is totally irrelevant," said Mr. Julian. "Officer, take him away! Mr. Barnes, shall we return now?"

Arthur soon reported the track in good condition, and both trains started on their way, an engineer having been provided for the other train in the person of the man who had run the special engine bearing Barnes and the officers.

The next day Clarkson was locked up, in default of bail, and Jewell chuckled to himself as he thought how nicely he had kept out of prison. He heard of Rod's death, and suspected that Mort knew about it, though he said nothing to him upon the subject.

"Now for Turk," he thought. "If the rascal suspects anything we will have to work shrewdly and suddenly."

He did not know that Isaac Barak, otherwise the Turk, was already working against him.

CHAPTER XIX.

A GRAVE ACCUSATION NOT PROVED FOR WANT OF EVIDENCE.

The next day after the mysterious murder of Rodney Jamison, as Mort Jewell was sitting in the office with his father, a detective entered.

"I have a warrant for the arrest of Mortimer Jewell," he said, abruptly.

Mort turned pale, but calling his customary effrontery to his aid, stared at the man and said quietly:

"That is my name. May I inquire upon what charges I am to be arrested?"

"That of murdering a man by the name of Rodney Jamison at a place called Dan's, in the woods near Chester, on Sunday night or Monday morning, October 15 or 16."

"Ah, you are very explicit. Governor, will you go bail for me?"

"To be sure; how much is it?"

"That must be decided by a magistrate. The gentleman will first have to undergo an examination."

"Then I demand that it shall take place at once," said Mort, in a decided tone.

"By all means," added his father.

"I can account for my whereabouts during the whole of that eventful night; but my witnesses are, some of them, persons who cannot be present at any and all times, their business calling them away."

"I will go with you, Mort, and fix the matter up," said Jewell.

The three left the office, the detective walking in advance, so as not to attract attention.

Jewell easily obtained leave for Mort to go upon his own recognizance until the afternoon, when a preliminary examination was to take place, and then the summoning of witnesses began.

Arthur and Fitz were very much surprised at their being notified that their presence would be required at the courthouse at two o'clock, to present their evidence as to the whereabouts of Mortimer Jewell on the night of October 15—16.

The prosecution evidently did not expect to be called upon so soon to present their case, and asked for an adjournment until the next day at least, but this was not granted.

The first witness called was an old woman named Meg Anderson, who swore that she saw the murder of Rodney Jamison, and forthwith described it accurately.

After being cross-examined by Mort's lawyer she was taken from the stand and Turk was called up.

His evidence tended to show that Mort owed Rod a good deal of money, given to him at the gambling table.

After more not very satisfactory evidence had been obtained from him, the case for the people here rested.

Then the witnesses for the defence were called up.

Arthur and Fitz both swore that he had gone to Chester, and returned from there the next morning; that he did not appear flushed or excited, and that he acted as usual.

Jewell testified that Mort had retired shortly after eight o'clock; that he had heard him go into his room and remain there.

Barak had sworn that the murder had taken place about half-past one, or anyhow between one and two o'clock, and the woman had substantiated the statement.

Mr. Jewell's footman swore that he had heard Mr. Mortimer Jewell's heavy breathing at that very time, having remained up late at his master's request.

He testified, also, that at six o'clock on Monday morning he had rapped upon the door of his young master's room, and had been answered by him from within.

Mort was asked if he had not, upon many occasions, left the house by stealth, and visited Dan's.

Knowing that many witnesses could prove his having been there, he admitted this much, but denied having gone there "by stealth," as the lawyer had expressed it.

"Your honor," said the lawyer, "I request that my client be discharged, and I also charge Isaac Barak, alias 'the Turk,' with conspiring against the life of Mortimer Jewell, in that he

has testified falsely against the aforesaid, and order his immediate arrest."

"I do not see as the testimony against the prisoner warrants my holding him, as he has clearly proved an alibi," said the magistrate, "and I therefore discharge him. If the grand jury see fit to indict him that is not my affair. In the matter of the witnesses Barak and Meg Anderson, they have evidently mistaken the prisoner for some other person. I am not prepared to say who did commit this crime, but I maintain that Mr. Mortimer Jewell did not. He is therefore discharged."

Fitz and Arthur went at once to the yard, there being but little time to spare, and Jewell and his son went home.

To the surprise of both, Fitz had received a letter from his sister desiring him to come with his friend to a place mentioned, that afternoon, as the writer had something of importance to communicate to them both.

The young men were on hand promptly at the hour named, and were admitted to a room on the ground floor of a house standing back from the street and surrounded by a garden.

The weather was unusually warm, and the windows were open, a thick bush growing close to one, near which sat the young woman who had put Arthur in such peril of his life.

"Listen to me!" she said, in an authoritative tone. "I hold the life of your friend in my hands."

"Is this all you want to say?" asked Fitz, the ensuing conversation taking place between him and his sister aloud, Arthur merely listening.

"No, it is not. What is your name?"

"A pretty question for you to ask; Clarkson Fitz Gerald, of course."

"It is not. It is Fitz Gerald Clarkson."

"Well?"

"You are the son of Maxwell Clarkson, the dishonest secretary."

"Thank you for the information."

"It is correct, though he would not care to own you."

"I'd rather he wouldn't."

"Tom Jewell is his enemy for many reasons. Clarkson is a relation of his wife; one of the few left."

"Well?"

"I propose to show Tom Jewell and his precious son Mort that I know enough about them to cause them a good deal of trouble."

"What is it?"

"The old man has conspired to kill your friend!"

"I know it, for you had a hand in it."

"Do you know who he is?"

"Arthur Boynton."

"No."

"Who then?"

"Arthur Jewell, Tom Jewell's son."

"Impossible!"

"Not at all. Turk!"

At the sound Isaac Barak entered.

"Who is this young man?" pointing to Arthur.

"The son of Tom Jewell! Rod and I were hired, and tried, some seventeen years ago, more or less, to get rid of him."

"You didn't succeed?"

"No. We stole him from a house where he was concealed, put him on the railroad track, and left him."

"What then?"

"Along comes Boynton; the villain jumps down on the pilot, picks up the youngster, takes him away, and rears him as his own child."

"What has my being the son of Tom Jewell got to do with your plans?" asked Arthur.

"Everything. His father-in-law's will provided distinctly that if he had any children by a former marriage, neither he nor they would receive one cent of his wife's fortune."

"Well?"

"That's why he wanted to get rid of you, for Mort would lose the property if you appeared."

"And me, being his wife's relation, would get the greater portion of it?" asked Fitz.

"Yes."

"That is why you want to produce Arthur, is it?"

"Yes."

"You were engaged to Mort Jewell once?"

"That is because I was running two strings to my bow."

"How did you happen to know that Arthur was Jewell's son?"

"Because I was the nurse girl, and let Rod and Barak have the child. I was paid well for my trouble. I knew whose child it was all along, and why Jewell wanted to get rid of it. I knew more than the wretch did himself, and when I discovered the lad again, was it any wonder that I wanted to get rid of him?"

"Why?"

"Because he stands in our way—in yours and mine."

"How so?"

"Will he not prevent us from getting the fortune?"

"You said he would keep Mort from it."

"He will not; he will keep it from us!" hissed Kate angrily.

"You are mistaken."

"How so?"

"Being the child of Jewell's first wife he will prevent Mort from getting the property, and it will revert to us."

"He is not the child of the first wife."

"What!" cried Fitz, springing up in his excitement.

"He is the child of the present wife, and the heir to all the property."

It was now Arthur's turn to be astonished.

"How know you this?" he demanded.

"I will tell you. I changed the babies in their cradles, took Jewell's child and put it in this one's place, and carried this one away to where the other was supposed to be."

"Why?"

"Because, even then, I was old enough to know that act might be the means of one day making us rich. Jewell did not know who I was, but an old woman, called Meg, told me all about it."

"Mort is then Jewell's own child?" said Fitz.

"Yes; he is dark, like Jewell, though at that time he promised to be light, like his mother."

"Did not Jewell detect the deception?"

"No; nor the mother either, poor thing."

"The children are the same ages?"

"No; Jewell was first married in New York. Then he came west with his wife, though he stowed her away so that no one should see her. I was the nurse girl, for she was not very well."

"Well, go on," for Kate had paused.

"I want you to understand the whole case. Jewell saw this other lady, knew she was wealthy, and determined to possess her."

"The villain!"

"He made all haste and married her in less than a month after the first wife, poor thing, had died in giving birth to a child, a poor little thing that I never supposed would live. Then he was married, and in due time Arthur was born."

"Then Arthur comes in for it all?"

"Yes, and that is why I hate him."

"Stop a bit. He prevents Mort from getting anything, does he not?"

"Yes."

"And Mort does the same thing to him in return."

"How?"

"By being the child of the first wife."

"I had overlooked that point in my blindness and rage. However, we will stop Mr. Mort, at all events. I shall go up with you to-night and take Turk and other witnesses to prove our claim. Jewell's wife is not at all well, I hear, and may die at any moment. The examination of her son on a charge of murder gave her a terrible shock. This news will settle the business and we will be independently rich."

"How can you be so heartless, Katie?" said Fitz.

"Because it pays me."

CHAPTER XX.

THE LISTENER—SUDDEN NEWS—A PLOT.

There had been a listener to the preceding conversation, whom no one present suspected.

This was Mort Jewell.

He had gone to Chatham to hunt up evidence against Barak, or to learn where he was, if possible, and put one of his spies on the fellow's track.

Seeing Arthur and Fitz go into the house, which he knew Kate sometimes visited, he suspected that some plot was brewing.

He had crept up to the window, hearing voices, and under the shade of the large bush had heard everything that had passed.

His father had already told him, to be sure, that Arthur was his brother; but here he saw that the deceiver had himself been deceived, and that his miserable scheme would but recoil upon his own head.

Satisfied that he could learn no more, he stole away unobserved, taking a by-lane to the depot.

"Now I am decided," he muttered. "Arthur Boynton, or Arthur Jewell, rather, dies to-night."

He looked perfectly capable of committing any crime at that moment, and so he was.

He now saw why Barak had changed his tactics.

There was more money to be made out of the other side, and that was why he had tried to swear away his (Mort's) life.

"I'll bet he killed Rod himself," muttered Mort, as he hurried along, swinging his stick savagely.

"The old woman, too; why should she want to get rid of me?" mused the young villain, now forgetting entirely his new-found friendship towards Arthur.

"I managed that affair first-rate," he muttered. "I thought of the alibi dodge when I started out, and even the old man was deceived. It was lucky that I slept so late that morning, and that I got back before old Adolf awoke. I wonder he didn't hear me open the window or chuck the ladder up to the hook."

Something must be done at once, and as he walked on he turned over several plans in his mind.

"By George, I have it," he said at length. "The bridge at Hazard's Gap."

This was a place midway between Chatham and Chester, where there was a drawbridge, vessels sometimes having to pass.

"I'll sacrifice the whole lot," he hissed. "Turk and the she-fiend that has set all this business on foot."

In order to make sure of everything Mort went to the telegraph operator, who was a friend of his because he had to be, Mort having threatened to have him discharged, and gave him directions as follows:

"Look here, Joe, I'm going down to Hazard's, the station just beyond the gap, at a distance of three miles, and I want you to telegraph me if a certain party leaves on the 8.05 express. Understand?"

"Yes."

"You know Boynton, don't you?"

"The fellow they call the boy engineer?"

"Yes."

"I know him well."

"I want you to let me know if he takes his train out, and carries his regular fireman, and if he takes a lady passenger"—describing Kate—"and a wretch they call Turk."

"All right, Mr. Jewell. I'll let you know."

Mort turned to go and had reached the door when he heard his name called.

It was the operator calling.

"What do you want?"

"There is a message coming over the wires now for you."

"Is that so? Who sends it?"

"Your father."

"What's the matter with the old gentleman, I wonder?" muttered Mort.

"It is not good news, Mr. Jewell, and I guess I had better write it out."

The operator wrote out the message on a blank and handed it to Mort.

The young man retired to a quiet part of the waiting room and read as follows:

"To Mr. Mortimer Jewell, Chatham:—Your mother died half an hour ago. Come at once. Let all plans slide for the present.

"Thomas Jewell."

His mother dead! There was need for instant action, then:

"By Jove, how lucky!" he said to himself; "if I hadn't discovered their plans, they could have gone to work this very day. I must go down at one. I will stop over at Hazard's, though, for all the news, and tell pop about it afterwards."

He took the train and got out again, unnoticed, at Hazard's, where he waited until a telegram came for him, which was in about half an hour.

It read as follows:

"All right. They are all on hand, every one of them."

"Joe."

"Good enough!" muttered Mort. "Now to go and fix the man at the drawbridge."

He walked away in the darkness at a rapid pace, for he had three miles to go and he wanted all the time he could get.

As he walked along hurriedly, upon his errand of death, the night wind swept dismally through the trees, and wailed like the cry of a man doomed to die.

The mournful shriek of a night-owl sounded like the moan of a watcher over a corpse, and the very air was full of signs of an approaching catastrophe.

Why does Fitz tremble and turn pale as the iron horse, bearing him and the friend he loves so well, bounds along the track?

He has seen the face of the Maniac in the flames!

He says nothing to Arthur, but resolves to keep a careful lookout and act upon the instant.

Arthur is excited and his brain fairly throbs with the great thoughts that fill it, but he keeps his mind upon his work, withal, and holds the monster intrusted to his care well in check.

Let us look at the position of things before we continue, so that we will better understand what follows.

In the middle of the stream was a conical pile of masonry upon which the drawbridge rested, swinging around upon a pivot.

It was made of one piece, joining on the banks when in place, and being kept in the proper position for trains to pass

over, by a heavy pin, which was raised or lowered by mechanical means.

At first sight, one would be puzzled to know how the thing turned, as there was no winch in the center like most drawbridges of that time.

On the right bank of the stream, perched on high, was a little house where the draw-keeper slept, and from a window he could overlook the river and the conical mass of masonry.

The water was the motive power and the heavy levers were the mysterious hands which controlled its movements.

Pull one lever and the draw was turned into its proper channels, the heavy pin was lifted up and the draw swung slowly around upon its pivot.

Another lever was thrown up and there was the passage, all clear for vessels, and no danger of the draw swinging back.

Now to close the draw once more.

Pull down the second lever. In rushes the water at the other side, out it goes at the first; silently move the cogs, slowly swings the draw back to its place, chock! the pin slides down into its socket, and the draw is ready for trains to pass over.

What does Mort Jewell think as he hurries along the little path toward the cabin, where the draw-keeper sits reading by the light of the lantern.

This is what he thinks:

The keeper made drunk, the draw left open and the train already approaching—he is rid of his enemies and can enjoy his fortune unmolested.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE OPEN DRAW.

The drawkeeper sits in his little box reading the news.

The down express, with Arthur and Fitz in the cab, is rushing along at full speed, the shriek of the engine sounding now and then among the hills, and echoing and re-echoing until the sound is lost.

Arthur, buoyant and happy, Fitz filled with a gnawing dread of some coming evil, Kate, vindictive and vengeful, Turk, stolid and silent—all these are hurrying onward toward their doom, which Mort Jewell is preparing for them.

Brooks, the draw-keeper, hears a sound outside and raises his head.

The door is thrown open and Mort Jewell enters.

"Hello, Brooks! How are you?"

"Why, Mr. Mortimer, whatever can you be doing out here at this time of night?"

"I had business in the village and I find I've got to stay all night. It was dull down there, so I thought I would come down and see you."

"Glad you did, sir. It's mighty lonesome hereabouts on wild nights like this."

"Tis so. Do you stay here all night?"

"No; I get a relief at twelve, but there's nothing doing until morning after the down express passes."

"How does the draw work?" said Mort. "I've a curiosity to see it operate. I've often heard of it, but I've yet to see it."

"It goes by hydraulics. That's what they calls it, but I say that the water moves it. Wait till the train comes and then I'll show ye."

"No, I can't do that. I've got to get back to town."

"Oh, well, it's safe enough, Mr. Jewell, for there's plenty of time. Watch me now."

"You work it by levers?"

"Yes, see."

Brooks lifted up a ratchet, laid his brawny hands upon the lever, forced it down and secured it in place.

A low, rumbling sound was hear beneath them. The water

poured in, the wheel revolved and the bridge slowly swung around parallel with the stream.

"Beautiful, beautiful!" said Mort, looking out the little window.

What is that he holds in his left hand, partly covered with a handkerchief in his right?

What pungent odor is that which arises?

What is he doing?

Saturating a handkerchief with chloroform.

The bridge has swung around and the draw is open.

"What's the matter, Mr. Mortimer? Are you took sick?" says Brooks.

"Yes, I feel—a little—faint. Give me—some—water—quick!" Has he sniffed the pungent drug he is using?

No.

It is merely a clever trick upon his part.

The kind-hearted draw-keeper pours out a glass of water from a pitcher standing near.

He runs to the young man's side.

Ah! what is that stifling, choking feeling that overcomes him?

Thud!

He has fallen to the floor insensible.

"Good!" mutters Mort, throwing a handkerchief over his face.

A convulsive gasp or two and the man straightens out as though lifeless.

"That's all right," murmurs the wretch, "but suppose he should recover?"

He looks around the place, opens one or two lockers, and finds a short length of stout rope.

It is but the work of a few minutes to bind the man hand and foot, and drag him into one corner of the small room.

Mort glances at the clock.

There is but ten minutes more to spare.

"Aha! success crowns my efforts. This fellow will not awake until the morning, and long before that time that down express will be a shattered wreck, and I am free of my enemies forever."

He glances once more out upon the river.

"What a splendid thing it is to have brains?" he said with a laugh. "If some genius had not put that thing there, what trouble I would have had. Now, it is just as easy as you can imagine."

He stands there in silence for a moment and then turns and looks at the insensible draw-keeper.

"Ay, lie there until morning, you poor fool, and then learn what your negligence has cost!" As a horrible thought crosses his mind: "He will remember me!"

As this idea came to him, he draws a knife and advances toward the unconscious man.

"This will stop him remembering anything," he says as he raises his hand.

Hark!

What is that—a cry for help?

No, the whistle of a locomotive.

Mort springs to his feet.

"Ha! there is no time to lose. Let him live. He cannot hurt me. He won't remember anything until the morning."

He opens the door, goes out, shuts it and hastens down the slippery path, and mutters to himself between his closely-drawn lips:

"Good-night, Mr. Arthur Jewell, and farewell to your glittering prospects!"

He hastens toward the village where no one has seen him leave for the draw-keeper's, and the whistle of the locomotive sounds in his ears.

"Aha! the draw is open and there is no one to close it!" he mutters. "They'll all be lost, and I am saved."

Then he rushes on, not noticing two figures crouched together at the side of the path.

The train was within a few miles of the place of danger when Fitz suddenly uttered a cry of alarm.

He had seen that face again, this time it peered at him from the cab window.

"My God! There it is again!"

"What is it?" asked Arthur.

"There it is again!"

"What?"

"That face!"

"Whose face?"

"His, the Maniac engineer's!"

"Where?"

"Outside."

"How did it look?"

"Calm and placid, but oh! the depth of those eyes, they pierced my very soul. It is gone now and I shall not see it again!"

"Why not?"

"Because I am doomed!"

"Don't give away like that, Fitz! Cheer up! You have escaped before!"

"But not this time. I have seen it twice to-night."

"Take that as a good sign, man! Cheer up! There is no danger!"

"But I tell you there is!"

"Nonsense! We have passed all the bad places!"

"All except—"

"What?"

"The drawbridge over Hazard's Gap!"

"I'll wager that it is all right. No one could interfere with that very well."

"And yet—. Oh, Heaven!"

"What is it?"

"The face again!" shrieked Fitz, and then, with a low moan he fell unconscious on the floor of the cab.

Arthur did not check his speed, but tried to restore his friend to consciousness.

And meanwhile, the train was speeding on toward the open draw—toward destruction.

Brooks, the draw-keeper lies unconscious and helpless; while not half a mile away is the down express coming at full speed.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN THE NICK OF TIME.

Nellie Brooks was the daughter of the draw-keeper and was a bright young girl of nineteen.

She had no mother, so she kept house for her father, whom she dearly loved.

They lived nearly half a mile from the bridge and Nellie usually waited until after the down express passed, so as to have a nice supper ready for her father when he came home.

She was not afraid to stay alone in the house, being a courageous girl and not at all timid; but this night she had company, a girl about her own age.

The weather was so threatening that Nellie persuaded her companion to wait until Brooks came.

"He will see you home, then, Josie, and you won't get wet."

The young lady consented to this arrangement, and the two were busily chatting when there came a heavy knock at the door.

"Come in," she said, boldly, having no thought of fear.

The door was pushed open and a man in rags and tatters, blear-eyed and half intoxicated, entered.

Nellie's companion screamed, but the daughter of the draw-keeper merely arose from her seat and said:

"What do you want?"

"Something t' eat an' drink, an' a kiss, my beauties. All alone, ain't ye? Ho, ho! Brooks ain't home, is he? Ho, ho! That's bully!"

"Leave the house, Dan Browning, you miserable tramp, you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

"Ought I?" laughed the fellow, who was well known as a ne'er-do-well, who had been a drunkard for years and who had been in jail more than once.

"Indeed I won't!" he continued. "Not until you gimme a kiss. I've been kicked and cussed, 'cused o' doin' this and that, an' all the time I'm as innocent as a lamb!"

"Oh, Nellie," said Josie, "do get him away. Let's run and tell your father."

"And leave him the run of the house? I guess not."

"Might 'a been in Brooks' place myself," muttered the man, "if it hadn't been for the Turk. He put up a job on me. Had me sent up for stealin' a young un' I never knowed. I got even with him an' stole the rum he put in old Boynton's cab. Wanted to make Boynton tight so's he'd lose his posish."

"What does he mean?" asked Josie.

"I don't know. Boynton used to be an engineer, I think."

"Boynton! Yes, old Boynton, the maniac—horsewhipped Turk once for speakin' sassy to the gal he was goin' ter marry. She went back on him after that and he never married any one. Turk tried to ruin him after that. Nice feller, he is. Keeps company with young Jewell. Bad boy, that—met him to-night goin' toward the drawbridge! Means mischief! Saw it in his eye."

At this Nellie became excited.

Mischief to her father!

What could it mean?

What could young Jewell have against her father, and how could he hurt him?

"Heard him mutterin' something about the draw," continued the tramp, half to himself. "Shouldn't wonder if he meant to leave it open. Shouldn't wonder 'f he hated that young fellow that runs the down express. Wonder what for?"

Leave the draw open!

The words cut Nellie to her heart.

The train would be wrecked, hundreds of beings lost, and her father blamed, perhaps thrown out of a situation.

Could the man be telling the truth?

He might be, though half drunk.

It was best to believe him, at all events.

What could she do?

Fly to her father's aid. Warn him, or, if too late to do that, go to his assistance!

But Dan Browning, what was to be done with him?

That she quickly settled.

"Josie," she whispered, "you must come with me. I fear that my father is in danger. In fact, I am sure of it."

"Are you afraid to go there alone?"

"No; not when there are lives to be saved."

"Gimme suthin' to eat," said Dan, staggering toward Nellie.

The brave girl took him by the shoulder, and pushing him toward the pantry, said:

"Go in there and help yourself. You'll find plenty."

Dan entered. The array of tempting things, pie, cake, bread, meat and pickles, preserves, cordials and currant wine was too much for him to resist.

As soon as he was well inside, Nellie closed and locked the door, and then seizing Josie by the hand, dragged her out into the night.

They fly along the road like the wind, the sense of unknown danger adding swiftness to their feet.

Heaven grant that they may reach the place in time.

The rain is falling now, but the girls never heed it, nor even know of it, so intent are their thoughts upon other matters.

Faster and faster yet they fly along the dark road, no light to guide them, and no one to show them the way.

This is not needed, for many a time has Nellie Brooks traveled that road, and she knows every inch of it.

Suddenly Nellie hears someone approaching, and she drops down upon the ground, pulling Josie after her, as the form of a young man passes.

Hark! What wild shriek is that which rings out upon the silent air?

The approaching locomotive.

This arouses Nellie, and she arises to her feet and runs up the path.

She bursts open the door, and the sight she sees tells the whole story.

Her father bound and helpless.

She glances out upon the water and sees that the draw is open.

The train is coming from the other side of the gap, and therefore there can be no warning that will save it.

The draw must be closed.

Barely three minutes to spare before the train is due.

She sprang to the lever and threw her weight on it, but could not budge it.

"Josie, Josie! Help me!" she screamed.

Josie comprehended the situation in a moment, and sprang to help her, and under their combined weight the lever descended, slowly at first, but then with increased speed.

The flood gates are opened, the wheel moves, and swiftly and silently the draw swings around and click! the pin falls into its place.

At the instant a last whistle is heard, a broad track of light is thrown over the water, the train rushes upon the bridge, exactly as the pin falls, and passes over in safety, while the poor girls, overcome with the reaction, fall senseless at the foot of the great lever.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A COUNCIL OF WAR—THE ENEMY OPENS FIRE.

The bridge had been passed in safety.

A moment afterward Fitz recovered, Arthur having dashed a cup of water in his face.

"Are we safe?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"Thank God!"

"Amen!" says Arthur, not knowing what a frightful peril he had escaped.

"I am afraid we are not out of our troubles yet," said Fitz, in a moment.

"Why?"

"Because I saw the face three times."

"How did it look the last time?"

"Triumphant."

"Then be assured that the danger, if danger there was, has passed, and that we shall have no trouble."

"What you say may be true, for heretofore I have never seen the face but once, and it has always meant danger. You must be right and the calamity has been averted, though how I know not."

"Let us be satisfied that it has passed, and not trouble ourselves about the means."

There was nothing more of interest during the remainder of the night, and in two or three hours the train ran into the depot at the terminus, and Arthur delivered his passengers safe and sound, and entirely ignorant, as he was himself, of the dreadful fate from which they had been saved.

But the author of the intended catastrophe, what of him?

Judge of his astonishment when ten minutes later he heard the whistle of the engine, and the train swept by him on its way to the city.

"I must get to the city at once," he said, "and put the old man on guard. Confound this mishap! Why didn't I stay until this thing was all over!"

He fairly flew along the track in his haste, and made his way to a livery stable, and after awhile succeeded in arousing one of the men, and on Mort's promise to pay him a large sum he provided a pair of fast horses and a light carriage, and drove to Mort's home only an hour and a half behind the train.

Mort admitted himself by means of his latch-key, and going at once to his father's room, gained admittance, and told his father all that occurred.

"By George, Mort, you did well," said the old villain when the narrative was ended. "I can't imagine how you happened to fail."

Then, he questioned the young man minutely, and was as much puzzled as Mort to know how the plan could have miscarried.

The two villains sat up plotting against their enemies, and finally went to bed.

It was a singular fact that neither the old nor the young villain said a word concerning her who lay cold in death, not twenty feet away, and spoke only of their selfish plans, but such was the actual fact.

Contrary to expectation, the enemy did not turn up that day, and the funeral was appointed for the next.

Neither Turk nor Arthur nor Wicked Kate could be found, in spite of a thorough search.

Another engineer was put in Arthur's place, and no one came forward to accuse Mort of attempting to wreck the train.

This made the arch plotter more uncomfortable than if a vigorous attack had been made, but it was not till after the funeral was over, and the two supposed mourners were eating breakfast the next morning when the footman entered and announced that several ladies and gentlemen were in the drawing-room and insisted upon seeing the gentlemen.

"By George, Mort," said Jewell, "the squall has broke at last."

When they entered the drawing-room they found Arthur, Fitz, Kate, Turk, and an old woman and two legal gentlemen.

"Mr. Jewell," said one of the lawyers, coming to the point at once, "I am here to urge the claim of your son," pointing to Arthur, "to his share of your wife's property."

"By George," muttered Jewell, "they are putting him forward instead of Kate; that's funny."

"You do not deny that he is your son, do you?"

"No, I do not," said Jewell, boldly. "He is my son by my first wife."

"Not so," said the lawyer. "He is your second wife's son, and we are prepared to prove it."

"It can make no difference, whichever way you put it," said Jewell, "for this young man," pointing to Mort, "is my son, also. The two claims equalize each other, and neither of the young men gets a cent."

"You are mistaken; my client is the only son, and gets it all."

"What do you mean?" gasped Jewell, turning pale.

"I mean that Mortimer Jewell is not your son, and has no claim whatever upon the property."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ENEMY MAKES A GALLANT FIGHT.

"Mort not my son!" said Jewell, in the most utter astonishment, his hair fairly standing on end, and his eyes starting from their sockets.

"No."

"Whose is he, then?"

"Mine!"

It was the old woman who had spoken.

"Yours?"

"Yes," she repeated, coming forward. "Mine!"

"It is all false!" cried Mort in a rage. "I the son of that old hag! Impossible!"

"Listen to me a moment, and I will prove the truth of what I state."

"I will not. Father, put these people out. Are we obliged to listen to their ravings? Have we no rights in our own house?"

"You had better listen to us, Mr. Jewell," said the lawyer, "for otherwise we will take the matter into the courts."

"Go ahead," said Jewell, half dazed; "but you might have taken a more opportune moment than the present, with my wife only buried yesterday."

"We had our reasons for that, sir, as you yourself are probably aware."

"Never mind that; go ahead with your comedy."

"Burlesque, I should call it!" sneered Mort, lighting a cigar, and sitting with his feet on the mantel.

"Proceed, Mrs. Anderson," said the lawyer.

The old woman, the same that had testified at the trial, took a seat and told her story.

She had been married in New York thirty years before, and had moved to the west with her husband. About ten years after, just after she had a child born to her she was called to nurse a lady in childbirth, and took her own child along. The woman's child had lived only three hours and she had substituted her own child for it to give it a good home. In order that she might know her own child again, she had scratched his arm, high up on the shoulder, with a needle, and rubbed ink in the wound, leaving a mark shaped like the letter V.

Mort had listened in silence to all that the woman had said, but as the woman finished speaking he fell from his chair to the floor, uttering a cry of baffled rage, and foaming at the mouth.

His collar and cravat were removed, his shirt band loosened, and cold bandages applied to his forehead.

He soon grew quiet and was placed upon a lounge.

His coat was removed, and one of the lawyers quickly ripped the left sleeves of his shirts, and exposed to the gaze of all a distinct and carefully outlined "V" in blue, high up on his arm near the shoulder.

"What better proof do you want than that?" said the lawyer. "Besides that, we have the sworn statement of the nurse-girl, Kate Clarkson, as to her having seen this mark upon the child when he was an infant."

Jewell was in a rage.

Mort an impostor, the property to go into another's hands, all his plans to amount to nothing—it was too much.

There was nothing that he could oppose to Arthur's claim, as his own child had died before his second marriage, and not even a legal quibble could save him.

"What proof have you that the boy, Arthur, is my son?" he said.

"Abundant proofs. The sworn statements of two persons, and the appearance of the young man himself. Look at that

portrait," said the lawyer, pointing to a likeness of Mrs. Jewell that hung on the wall. "Who can doubt the likeness of my client to that face? This alone would be proof strong as Holy Writ. Then, too, we have the evidence of a man who has known the boy for years, so that we can connect the changed child with the one stolen and placed on the track, and thence to the rescue and the final arrival at young manhood of my client, Arthur Jewell."

"Who is he that can do all this? I would like to see him."

"Behold him!"

The door was opened, and a tall, handsome, but singular-looking man entered.

The Maniac Engineer.

"My one purpose in life," he said slowly and impressively, "has been to unravel a life's mystery. This young man, supposed to be my son, I saved from death, and have had him in my care ever since. It was the unraveling of his history that has made me the strange being I am."

"I knew that he had not been laid on the track for nothing, though at first I thought him the offspring of a miserable sot whom I saw drunk by his side."

"That he is the same that I saved I will swear to, and that he is the son of Thomas Jewell there is not the shadow of a doubt. Wretched man, you have been plotting for years to take the life of your own son, while you have held to your bosom an alien—one who had not the least claim upon you!"

"That he is my son I have now no doubt," said Jewell in desperation, "but he shall not enjoy his triumph!"

He suddenly drew a revolver and fired at Arthur's head.

The bullet missed him by the merest chance, and struck Turk, who was standing behind him, in a vital part.

Jewell fired twice afterward, and then in the confusion rushed from the room and eluded pursuit in the confusion that followed.

One of the shots struck Wicked Kate in the temple, and she expired without a groan.

The other lodged in the wall close to where the portrait hung, and so, luckily, no further damage was done.

Turk was found to be mortally wounded, and not able to live more than an hour at the latest.

He and Kate were taken to the hospital, and before he died the wretched man confessed to the murder of Rod, between whom and himself there had been a quarrel.

He did not doubt that the woman thought he had committed the crime, for she would never have sworn the life of her own son away, even had she believed him guilty, and it was for that woman that she was so particular in describing the murderer's appearance.

Mort knew of a crime which Rodney Jamison had committed, having been a witness to it, and this was the hold that he had upon the man, and always inspired Rod with a dread of the young fellow..

After the shooting Mort had mysteriously disappeared, and nothing was seen of him.

Then came the statement, not before made public, that he had attempted to wreck the down express at Hazard's Gap.

Then Arthur understood why Fitz had seen the face of the Maniac Engineer, and how they had escaped, in an almost miraculous manner, from a shocking death.

Jewell and Mort had both disappeared, and now it came out that the millionaire had not been as honest as he was supposed to be, Clarkson having confessed everything, and implicating Jewell badly.

"We have not finished with him yet," said Fitz. "He is working in secret against us, and I fear that some terrible calamity is at hand."

"The time for starting is at hand, anyhow," said Arthur, "for I have promised to take my engine out to-day, and I will be there."

CHAPTER XXV.

EXPLANATION—BAD NEWS FROM FITZ.

When Arthur was about half way to the depot he met Barnes and Mr. Julian.

"I don't want you to go out until this afternoon," said Barnes to him.

"How about Fitz?"

"He had better go. I have got a fireman for your engine, and the man who has been taking the four o'clock express will run this one."

They all went to the office, and pretty soon Boynton entered.

"I want to say," said Barnes, when they had all seated themselves, "that Mr. Boynton, your father in tenderness, if not in reality, has never drank a drop of liquor for the past ten years."

"I am glad of that," said Julian.

"I knew he had not," interposed Arthur. "I knew he was trying to redeem his character, and free himself of the bad reputation he had acquired."

"I did not know it, and consequently you can understand why I did not want to employ you, supposing you to be his son," continued Barnes. "When you told me you were not, I resolved to try you, and you have more than pleased me by your faithful conduct."

"When you disappeared, Mr. Boynton came to me and proved to me that he was perfectly reliable. I had a long talk with him, in which he told me that he was trying to discover the mystery of your life."

"He suspected that you were the son of Tom Jewell, between whom and himself there had long been an enmity."

"He had more than once discovered the man's rascality, and the only thing which prevented him from having the latter deposed was his addiction to strong drink."

"After that his reputation was against him, and Jewell was safe. After rescuing you from the robbers, who had been put upon your track by Jewell himself, you may remember that he said he was going to unfathom a life mystery."

"I remember it well."

"He sought out Kate and Meg Anderson and wormed from Turk's accomplices considerable information. At last he had everything in proper shape to prove your claim, and came to the city for that purpose."

"Mort Jewell must have overheard the conversation, and in fact the telegraph operator at Chatham has told me that Mort was particularly anxious to know if you all started on the 8.05 express."

"That he was awaiting an answer at Hazard's has been proved, and also that he meant to wreck the train. When Brooks recovered from his stupor he remembered everything, contrary, I presume, to Mort's expectations. At any rate, Miss Brooks, who, by the way, Arthur, has taken a great fancy to you, saw him coming from the bridge house, and heard enough to convince her that he had done the crime."

"Your father's strange habits, which he assumed as a means of disguising his real purpose, gave him an excellent opportunity of discovering the plans and purposes of the train robbers, every one of whom have, by his instrumentality, been arrested, excepting, of course, those who were killed."

"If Mort Jewell shows himself, which I don't think at all likely, he will be arrested upon several complaints: Collusion with the thieves, conspiracy against you, robbing his father, attempting to wreck a train, and other charges too numerous to mention, as they say."

"Detectives are upon his track, but he is a shrewd fellow, and I fear will make his escape. However, you need have no

fear of him. He will not trouble you in the least, as he cares now more for his own safety than anything else."

"As for the old rascal, I do not doubt that he will be captured. Our friend Clarkson, whom you gave such a scare, will be let off easily, though he will still have to stay five years in prison for his complicity in the robbery of the Pine Bluffs Bank."

"And by the way," remarked Arthur, "I consider it only right when I come into my property that Jewell's share of the theft should be paid."

"If you wish it very well, and considerable of that which Mort stole from him cannot be recovered unless we catch Mort. That will enable him to get out of the country and live easily for some years unless he indulges in his usual extravagance."

"There is one thing I wish to ask you, father," said Arthur to Boynton, for he still addressed him by that fond title. "Why is it that your face haunts Fitz at every period of danger?"

"I know not, unless because he has formerly associated me with all that is mysterious. He probably knows intuitively when danger threatens; some people have that faculty, and from associating me with scenes of peril and excitement he has come to fancying he sees my face at such times."

"It is not fancy; he does see it, for a fact. It is a hallucination, if you will, but that he actually sees the shadowy outlines of your head and face I cannot for an instant doubt."

While they were speaking even, a telegraph boy entered with a message that had just been sent over the wires.

"Express train wrecked at Chester. Broken rail. Fireman instantly killed. Engineer dying. Says fireman spoke of mysterious warning just before accident. Ten people killed—several more badly hurt. No blame attaches to the employees."

"The final warning has come at last," said Arthur. "Poor Fitz! I am sorry for him."

It was as Arthur had supposed.

Fitz had seen the phantom of the Maniac Engineer in the air, and had instantly communicated his alarm to the engineer.

The man laughed, but at that very instant the crash came, and Fitz was killed by the explosion of the boiler when the engine had jumped the track.

The engineer lived just long enough to tell the story, and then expired.

"It was better for poor Fitz to die," thought Arthur, "as his sensitive nature could not have endured the thought of the shame which would attach to him on account of his relationship with the dishonest secretary and the skilful accomplice of the robbers, Wicked Kate."

"It is better for him, poor fellow!" he mused, after a pause. "He could never have stood the suspicions that evil-minded people would have uttered. It is better so, poor fellow! He did me many a good turn, and I shall not forget him."

CHAPTER XXVI.

WINDING UP THE GAME—SUCCESS AT LAST.

That afternoon, when Arthur reached Hazard's, he found the young lady who had saved his life by her coolness and courage waiting to congratulate him on his narrow escape.

"I must rather congratulate you for your coolness and courage," he said, when she had finished, "for without that my life and the lives of all on board would have been sacrificed to the wicked purposes of a bad man."

"I only did my duty," she replied blushing. "I could not

bear to have my father blamed, although he could have exonerated himself. More than that, the thought of my preventing a dreadful calamity moved me to do as I did."

"Your forethought and prompt action has saved all our lives," said Arthur, "and I can never thank you sufficiently for your brave deed."

"You are too kind," she murmured, blushing more deeply than before.

"Not at all. Do you know what the company proposes to do?"

"No, indeed."

"To present you with a gold medal in consideration of your bravery upon a most trying occasion."

"Oh, dear! I don't deserve it."

"Beg pardon, but I think you do, and I have subscribed toward the fund myself, as have all the passengers who were with me upon that occasion."

"Then Josie deserves one, too, for I could not have done anything without her help."

"She will not be forgotten."

"I am glad of that, for she is a good girl, and deserves as much credit as anybody."

"Allow me to differ with you! However, I would not take one atom from the praise she is receiving. Now I must be off. I expect to be present when that medal is given."

We will just say, in passing, that the presentation of the medal was a grand affair, at which all the officers and most of the employees of the road attended in person, and at the present writing there is nothing that Arthur delights more to gaze upon, except the face of the recipient, than that medal which his—well, yes, we may as well say it—which his wife, formerly the bridge-keeper's daughter, Nellie Brooks, keeps in an elegantly mounted case in the drawing-room for everybody to look at.

Now that we have let it out we shall say right here that Arthur married the lovely girl two years afterward, and that there never was a merrier wedding in all the land.

There are other things to be told, however, before I wipe my pen on the back of my head—a very bad habit, by the way, and utterly ruinous to anything but a gold pen—and draw this tale to a conclusion, and so I will close my rambling and come to business.

Arthur expected that he had not seen the last of Tom Jewell, and he was not mistaken.

It was two days after Mort's disappearance, and Arthur, having reached Chatham, started to go to his hotel, taking the same short cut that he made upon the night that he first encountered Fitz.

The night was cold for October—more like a winter's night, the wind sweeping in strong gusts around the corners and fairly biting into one's bones.

On this account Arthur had buttoned up his coat around his throat, and, with his head down, was going ahead at a good pace, when he was suddenly set upon by a strong man, armed with a knife.

Luckily, from the fact that Arthur's collar was turned up and his hat met it, the first blow struck by the villain did not injure him.

In an instant he had grappled with his assailant, and seizing him by the throat dragged him to the light.

The man fought desperately to escape, at the same time attempting to stab Arthur, but the young man was sturdy beyond his years, and the villain was literally dragged under a street lamp, when Arthur threw him back so that he could see his face.

It was Tom Jewell.

"So—so. You have turned up again, have you?" said Arthur. "You'd better have left the country."

"I will kill you yet," growled the old villain. "I am not to be done out of my money so easily, I'll have you know."

"You had better not trouble me," said Arthur. "As you are my father I cannot harm you; but I would advise you to keep out of the way of the officers. Go! but another time I will not assist you to escape."

He turned away, leaving the man standing by the lamp-post. Jewell sprang at him, but Arthur heard him coming, quick as he was, and with one swift blow he knocked him to the ground.

The effect of that blow was more strange than one would suppose.

Jewell had a revolver, but he had not drawn it before on account of the noise it would make.

Before making this last attack, however, he had pulled it from his pocket, and intended to shoot as soon as he could grapple with the brave lad.

Arthur struck him before he could do this, and when he fell his hand, still grasping the weapon, was under him.

It was discharged by the concussion, and the bullet entered a vital part.

Arthur summoned assistance, and the scoundrel was taken to the hospital, where he lived scarcely an hour, being unconscious all that time.

Arthur's claim was sufficiently established, and he at once took possession of the property which was his by right, but which Mort had hoped to inherit.

Of Mort nothing more was ever seen, though it was afterward ascertained that he had fled to Europe, lived a fast, dissolute life for about five years, had gone to gambling, and had finally been shot by an angry Frenchman.

The strange being to whose daring Arthur owed his life, did not long survive the accomplishment of his purpose, and passed away peacefully within a year.

At this time his name is almost forgotten, and his strange life is but a passing remembrance, soon erased by other thoughts, except in the mind of the middle-aged millionaire I now have in view, Mr. Arthur Jewell, formerly the protege of the MANIAC ENGINEER.

THE END.

Read "JACK WRIGHT AND HIS ELECTRIC LOCOMOTIVE: OR, THE LOST MINE OF DEATH VALLEY," by "Noname," which will be the next number (245) of "Pluck and Luck."

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